

1 By: Bryce J. Ward, Mayor
2 Referred to the Chena
3 Riverfront Commission: 03/25/2021
4 Introduced: 04/22/2021
5 Adopted: 04/22/2021
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7 FAIRBANKS NORTH STAR BOROUGH

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9 RESOLUTION NO. 2021 – 10

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11 A RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING CONTINUED WORK ON THE CHENA RIVERWALK
12 PHASE III PROJECT AND CONSIDERATION FROM THE ALASKA RAILROAD
13 CORPORATION TO GRANT A LONG-TERM LAND INTEREST FOR THE PROJECT
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15 WHEREAS, The Fairbanks North Star Borough (Borough) has been working
16 with the State of Alaska, City of Fairbanks, and Alaska Railroad Cooperation (ARRC) since
17 the late 1980's to construct a Riverwalk on the North side of the Chena River; and
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19 WHEREAS, The Chena Riverfront Commission is a joint Commission of the
20 Borough and City of Fairbanks charged with, "planning and fostering the development of
21 riverfront property along the Chena River;" and
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23 WHEREAS, The Borough has adopted a Chena Riverfront Plan as an element
24 of the Borough Regional Comprehensive Plan; and
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26 WHEREAS, The Chena Riverfront Plan states, "Construct new paths along,
27 above, and as close as possible to the riverbank in order to take full advantage of river
28 views;" and
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30 WHEREAS, In 1987, the Borough Assembly passed Resolution 87-099
31 requesting "local public interest in Alaska Railroad Land located along the North Bank of
32 the Chena River;" and
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34 WHEREAS, In 1990, the ARRC offered in a letter to the Borough, "to transfer
35 control to the FNSB this area along the river designated for greenbelt, trails, and public
36 amenities by entering into a rent-free, long-term ground lease for this property" which
37 was accepted by the signature of Borough Mayor Juanita Helms, but never transferred;
38 and
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40 WHEREAS, In 1993, the ARRC stated in a letter to the Borough they,
41 "agreed to provide the land needed for the trail system for only a small administrative
42 fee and accept the ongoing maintenance responsibility for the bridge and the portion of
43 the trail system site on the 80-acre parcel;" and

44 WHEREAS, In 1994, the ARRC restated this commitment in a letter to the
45 Borough with, "...the Railroad will ensure land is available for the construction of the trail
46 at no cost to the community..." and "ARRC will accept the ongoing maintenance
47 responsibility for the bridge and the portion of the trail system site on the 80-acre parcel;"
48 and
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50 WHEREAS, From 1994 to 2006, the project did not make substantial
51 progress due to lack of construction funding, but the effort was renewed with
52 development of a Conceptual Master Plan by Festival Fairbanks and the Chena Riverfront
53 Commission passed Chena Riverfront Resolution 2006-2 "...strongly support[ing] the
54 Festival Fairbanks Conceptual Master Plan for the development of a pedestrian walkway
55 and bike path on the north side of the Chena River from Peger Road to the William
56 Ransom Wood Centennial Bridge;" and
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58 WHEREAS, In 2010, the Borough and City of Fairbanks, respectively, passed
59 Resolutions 2010-44 and 4456 encouraging the Alaska Legislature to transfer the parcels
60 of ARRC land to the Borough; and
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62 WHEREAS, In 2011, the ARRC sent a letter to Senator Joe Thomas stating
63 their commitment and support for the project and offered to issue a long-term land use
64 permit at no cost to the community, and the City of Fairbanks applied for the permit; and
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66 WHEREAS, In 2014, the ARRC granted a 5-year Land Use Permit and the
67 City of Fairbanks accepted its terms and conditions by Resolution, including the
68 maintenance responsibility for the path and ownership and maintenance responsibility for
69 the pedestrian bridge over the Chena River; and
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71 WHEREAS, In 2014, the City of Fairbanks received State funds to initiate
72 design of the Chena Riverwalk Stage III project; and
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74 WHEREAS, In 2017, the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation System
75 (FMATS) provided Federal funds to complete the design and construction of the project;
76 and
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78 WHEREAS, During the design process it was realized by the City of
79 Fairbanks and Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) that
80 the permit was not adequate to meet Federal requirements for an investment in a public
81 transportation facility since a revocable, near-term permit (expiring January 31, 2019) is
82 not a secure land interest; and
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84 WHEREAS, In July 2020, FAST Planning (formerly FMATS) sent a letter to
85 the ARRC Board of Directors summarizing the project's history and discussions with ARRC
86 over the past 30 years and requested a long-term interest in the land for the past as an

87 easement or long-term lease (preferably 50 years) at nominal or no cost to the
88 community; and

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90 WHEREAS, The ARRC expressed concerns about the width of the footprint
91 needed for the project and the City of Fairbanks and ADOT&PF reduced the width to 20
92 feet and submitted new design drawings to the ARRC, but the ARRC Board of Directors
93 decided to, "...not proceed with the project at this time..." to watch development of the
94 subdivision over the next year; and

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96 WHEREAS, The City of Fairbanks and ADOT&PF are in the final design phase
97 of the project and FAST Planning has programmed \$1.7 million in Federal funds for
98 construction of the project in 2022; and

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100 WHEREAS, Time is of the essence to secure a long-term land interest on
101 ARRC's property to finish the design and right-of-way negotiations to get the project out
102 to bid in the next 12 months, and the Borough does not want to risk losing this
103 construction funding opportunity for the Community; and

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105 WHEREAS, Expanding the Chena Riverwalk to the North side of the Chena
106 River is consistent with the Borough Comprehensive Plan and the Borough Chena
107 Riverfront Plan; and

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109 WHEREAS, On July 28, 2020, the Borough Planning Commission voted to
110 approve Chena Riverwalk Stage III project as being consistent with the Borough Regional
111 Comprehensive Plan; and

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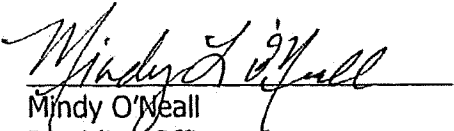
113 WHEREAS, This project has long been supported by the Chena Riverfront
114 Commission, Borough Assembly, and City Council for over 30 years, and the Community
115 continues to support this project.

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117 NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Assembly of the Fairbanks
118 North Star Borough encourages all parties involved to continue working on securing a
119 long-term land interest from the ARRC for the Chena Riverwalk Phase III project to bring
120 the project to construction as soon as practical.

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ADOPTED THE 22ND DAY OF APRIL 2021.


Mindy O'Neall
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:


April Trickey, CMC
Borough Clerk

Yeses: Sanford, Tomaszewski, Wilson, Cash, Lyke, Williams, Cooper, Lojewski, O'Neall
Noes: None