

Planning for the Future of Downtown Fairbanks

Planning Commission Work Session
March 12, 2019



Department of Community Planning

907 Terminal Street, Fairbanks, AK 99701

www.fnsb.us/communityplanning | (907) 459-1260

WHY IS A DOWNTOWN COMP PLAN NEEDED?

- Unique land use patterns and issues in the downtown
- Regional comp plan too broad to guide specific development patterns
- May want different development requirements in downtown:
 - Pedestrian-oriented
 - Setbacks
 - Landscaping
 - Gateway standards
 - Parking requirements
 - Signage
 - Street furniture
 - Public spaces/community art
- Most grants require a neighborhood or area plan to demonstrate the proposed project is supported by or complies with the plan
 - Redevelopment of the Polaris Building site

DOWNTOWN PLANNING PROCESS

- Focus on public outreach and citizen participation
- Community-driven
- Open and transparent
- Advisory group
- Flexible goals and strategies to meet changing conditions

HOW?

- Gather information as many different ways as possible
- Discuss topics with Working Group
- Ask the community
- Edit
- Present info back to the community

REPEAT AS OFTEN AS NEEDED

Downtown Planning Process

TIMELINE

Complete draft downtown plan this summer and adopt in fall/winter

PRODUCTS

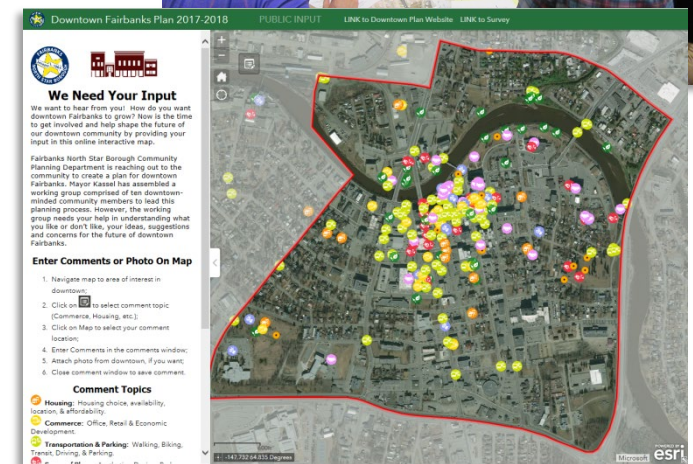
1. Comprehensive Plan with:
 - Goals
 - Strategies
 - Recommended actions and responsible parties
2. Future land use map
3. Multi-modal transportation circulation network map
 - With future functional classification of streets

POSSIBLE IMPLEMENTATION OPTIONS

- Review and amend zoning/ new zones
- New parking standards
- Methods to encourage/incentivize desired development
- Redevelopment or beautification projects, etc.

Community Outreach to Date

- September 2017 Kickoff meeting
 - Mapping exercise: 546 comments
 - 200 other comments
- Online survey
 - 889 respondents!
 - 2,435 comments
 - Promoted via newspaper, TV, Facebook, working group network
- Interactive online map
 - 266 comments
- Facebook
- Community groups & classes
- Project website
 - <http://fnsb.us/cp/Pages/downtownplan.aspx>



Topic Areas

1. Housing
(Housing Choice, Housing Affordability)
2. Commerce
(Office, Retail + Economic Development)
3. Transportation + Parking
(Walking, Biking, Transit, Driving + Parking)
4. Sense of Place
(Aesthetics, Design, Parks, Historic Preservation + Safety)
5. Natural Environment
(Stormwater/Snow Management, Access to Nature)
6. Culture
(Arts, Entertainment, Events, Cultural Uses + Diversity)
7. Social + Civic
(Government, Civic Institutions + Social Services)



Summary of Survey Comments

- **Housing**
 - Rental apartments, condos for sale and affordable housing
 - Mixed use; housing over offices/retail
- **Commerce**
 - Specific business recommendations: grocery store
- **Transportation & parking**
 - Parking is not in the right locations
 - More on-street parking, public surface lot parking is needed
 - Bike and pedestrian amenities are good but could be better
- **Sense of place**
- **Natural Environment**
 - Riverbank restoration, enhancement and maintenance
- **Culture**
 - Love the festivals & special events
 - More restaurants, bars and entertainment options are needed
- **Social & civic services**



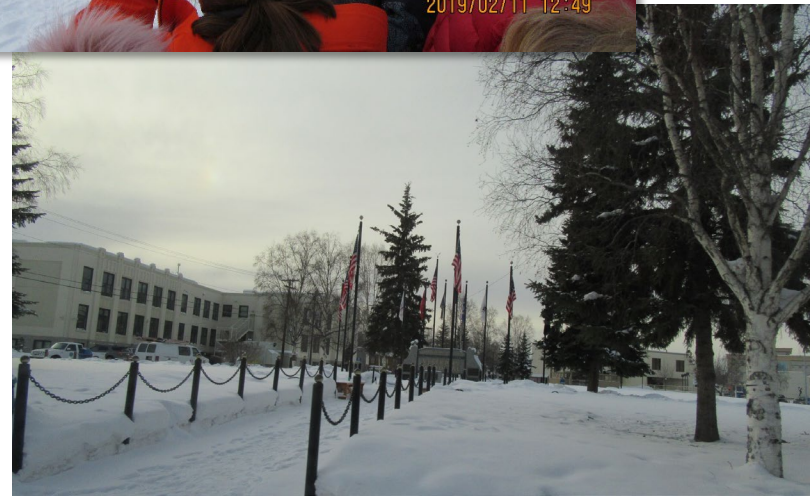
Working Group

- **Brenda Riley:** downtown resident; formerly with Fairbanks Children's Museum
- **Buki Wright:** Aurora Energy
- **Chris Miller:** Downtown business owner and resident
- **Deb Hickok:** Explore Fairbanks
- **Jackson Fox:** FMATS
- **Jerry Cleworth:** Downtown business owner, city council member
- **John Jackovich:** Downtown business owner and resident
- **Sabrina Binkley:** Spruce Tree Montessori school
- **Sue Sprinkle:** Downtown business owner and resident
- **Bree Kessler:** community development expert

Proposed Land Use Designations

Parks and Open Space:

Intended to protect and provide for parks, plazas, and public uses;
Intended to protect green space and open space corridors,
Intended to buffer and provide access to the Chena River.



Proposed Land Use Designation: Urban Core

Urban Core:

employment and activity center; walkable; high-density; mixed-use; public open space



Proposed Land Use Designation: Mixed Use Commercial



Mixed Use Preferred Commercial

- Emphasize regional commercial and civic uses;
- high density residential;
- public open space



Proposed Land Use Designation: Mixed Use Residential

Mixed Use Residential

- Transition between commercial and residential areas;
- high density residential with neighborhood-oriented commercial uses;
- public open space



Proposed Land Use Designation: Downtown Residential

Downtown Residential

- Protecting established residential neighborhoods;
- medium-density residential and residentially-compatible uses
- Duplexes, single family homes, ADUs



A detailed draft land use map for downtown Fairbanks, Alaska. The map shows various colored zones: green for Parks and Open Space, yellow for Downtown Residential, orange for Mixed Use Residential, brown for Mixed Use Commercial, and pink for Urban Core. Major streets like Wembley Ave, Phillips Field Rd, Airport Way, and Steese Hwy are labeled. A legend in the bottom left corner defines the color-coded zones. A north arrow is located in the top left corner. The map also includes labels for surrounding areas like Verdurun Ave and Alsace Loop.

•

Next steps

Community outreach

- Release **draft land use designations and map on project website**
- Solicit input via an **online survey**
- Staff continues outreach to experts, interest groups

Working group continues meeting twice monthly through July

- Review and revise draft goals and strategies in all topics
- Review and revise transportation network

Final draft available late this summer

Outreach and adoption process
late fall/winter



CONTACT INFORMATION

D. Christine Nelson, AICP, CFM
Director of Department of Community Planning
Fairbanks North Star Borough
907 Terminal Street
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267
cnelson@fnsb.us (e-mail)
907-459-1251 (office direct)

Melissa Kellner
Long Range Planner
Fairbanks North Star Borough
907 Terminal Street
Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267
mkellner@fnsb.us (e-mail)
907-459-1252 (office direct)

