

Sponsored by: Councilmember Tidwell*
Councilmember Cleworth*
Councilmember Ringstad
Councilmember Therrien
*indicates original sponsor
Date: April 13, 2026

RESOLUTION NO. 5207

A RESOLUTION OPPOSING THE CURRENT DESIGN AND FUNDING APPROACH FOR FAST PLANNING'S CHENA RIVERWALK STAGE III PROJECT AND ENCOURAGING CONSIDERATION OF MORE COST-EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVES

WHEREAS, the Chena Riverwalk project has been under consideration for approximately two decades, with evolving designs, costs, and community priorities; and

WHEREAS, the current proposed design requires a significant public investment; and

WHEREAS, the design proposes constructing a 3,148-foot pathway for \$7,980,012, or \$2,534.82/foot, representing a substantial increase from the project's original estimated cost of approximately \$1.7 million; and, for relative comparison, South Cushman Street was entirely reconstructed from Airport Way to 28th Avenue for \$9,774,900, or \$1,814/foot; and

WHEREAS, alternative routes and design approaches have been identified that would provide comparable non-motorized connectivity and community benefit for approximately \$1.8 million, a substantially lower cost; and

WHEREAS, the City of Fairbanks has a duty to prioritize fiscally responsible infrastructure investments that maximize public benefit relative to cost; and

WHEREAS, the current project diminishes the intended riverfront experience and limits public value by placing portions of the pathway far from the river corridor, with approximately 40 percent of the proposed route running along Peger Road; and

WHEREAS, the proposed design includes complex construction elements such as an elevated piling supported structure and environmental considerations that increase both initial costs and the risk of long-term maintenance obligations and repairs; and

WHEREAS, concerns have been identified regarding the overall cost, scope, and long-term sustainability of the project relative to alternative solutions.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF FAIRBANKS, ALASKA, as follows:

SECTION 1. The City Council formally opposes the advancement of the Chena Riverwalk project in its current design and cost structure.

SECTION 2. The City Council encourages the Fairbanks Area Surface Transportation (FAST) Planning process and all relevant agencies to reevaluate the project, including serious consideration of lower-cost alternatives that provide comparable community benefit.

SECTION 3. The City Council affirms that the City of Fairbanks does not intend to commit local matching funds toward the current Chena Riverwalk project as proposed.

SECTION 4. The City Council further affirms that the City of Fairbanks does not intend to assume ownership, operation, or long-term maintenance responsibilities for the project in its current form.

SECTION 5. The City Council encourages continued pursuit of cost-effective, practical, and sustainable non-motorized transportation improvements that align with community priorities and fiscal responsibility.


SECTION 6. The effective date of this resolution is six days after adoption.


Mindy O'Neall, Mayor

AYES: Cleworth, Marney, Ringstad, Sprinkle, Therrien, Tidwell
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None
APPROVED: April 13, 2026

ATTEST:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:


D. Danyielle Snider, MMC, City Clerk


Thomas A. Chard II, City Attorney