



# VISION FAIRBANKS

## THE TIME TO ACT IS NOW

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS:**  
 March 24, 7 pm sharp  
 March 25, 7 pm sharp  
 April 25, 7 pm sharp

This is beyond epic. Vision Fairbanks is a comprehensive community vision for revitalization. It is the culmination of multiple public workshops, surveys, and meetings over the past two years and will be the turning point of life for downtown.

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We urge you to attend one or all of these three critical dates.

The time has come to help Vision Fairbanks become a reality. This is the only comprehensive planning effort ever conducted in the history of downtown – don't let it just sit on a shelf – help this community put it into reality, be a part of history by showing up on these dates wearing blue.

Right now, as a community, we have the chance to stand up for having a say in the future development of our downtown. There are a million details that we will, as a community, need to discuss and decide upon together, but today is the day for saying that we believe in having a say in our own future and that we believe in this community driven plan.



**MARCH 24TH—7PM  
CITY HALL**

**MARCH 25TH—7PM  
BOROUGH ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS**

*City Council Consideration:*

*Borough Planning Commission Public Hearing:*

**Board Members:**

- Therese Sharp
- Monty Rostad
- Peter Beaver
- Mike Cook
- Ken Henry
- Georjean Seeliger
- Nelson Traverso
- Cindy Schumaker
- Susan Rainey
- Buzzy Chiu
- Bart LeBon
- Charles Bettisworth
- Suzi Waugaman

This is our first chance to show our solidarity. Make sure you are at the city council meeting wearing blue and showing your support for Vision Fairbanks. We want our councilmen and women to know that this is our community's plan for the future.

These are the people who will be guided by Vision Fairbanks in making future decisions regarding things like zoning changes. Be there in blue to show the planning commission that the residents and business owners support making changes that ensure smart growth downtown.

It should only take about 20 minutes of your time, but your actions will positively influence Fairbanks for many years to come.

This meeting won't take much of your time. Please show your support for making positive changes for the future growth of downtown.



**APRIL 24TH—7PM  
BOROUGH ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS**

*Borough Assembly Public Hearing:*

Asking you to show up at three different hearings is a lot... we understand your busy schedule, but it is important that we have a strong showing in front of the borough assembly.

Be there in blue and show that we are committed to getting this plan passed and have the resolve to see it through. Fairbanks is seeing her economic base move further and further away from the city center. Vision Fairbanks recognizes this and takes steps to keep the Golden Heart in the heart of downtown with renewed commerce and recreation.

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*This link to the final draft of the plan is available at  
[www.downtownfairbanks.com](http://www.downtownfairbanks.com).*

# YUKON QUEST FEST 2008



## Shine Under the Midnight Sun

Last year over 40,000 people filled the streets during the Midnight Sun Festival. Sign up to sponsor of this internationally renowned event and have your name seen by the thousands who fill the streets for 12 stellar hours of solstice celebration.

Contact the Downtown Association of Fairbanks for sponsorship opportunities.

It is not too late to sign up for a booth space. They're going fast, but give us a call and get a front row seat to all the festivities.

Get involved and call now to find out the best opportunities for your business.

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## Yukon Quest Starting Line February 9, 2008

This year the cold didn't stop people from lining the banks of the Chena River to wish both musher and dog safe travels as they embarked on the 1,000 mile journey to Whitehorse. Even with temperatures dipping below -40 degrees, spectators both large and small wanted to catch a glimpse of the teams heading out into the wilderness— some of them understanding the motivation behind such a trying journey, others just trying to figure out why you would want to travel the unforgiving terrain behind a pack of dogs and not in the comfort of an airplane.

It didn't matter if they were a die-hard fan or just wanting to witness a piece of history in action, frost gathered on everyone's faces— men had white beards and women white eyelashes. Fairbanks, with her Golden Heart (and a lot of planning) held plenty of opportunities for people to warm up inside the downtown businesses and the two tents on 1st Avenue. The Yukon Quest Fest was a great success as people poured into restaurants and shops hoping to lose a little of the chill.

The music, refreshments, and giveaways were just one part of this festival. The things that really made it work were the friendly attitudes and open doors that greeted every visitor to our fine town. A woman from Whitehorse finished the ConocoPhillips Treasure Quest with her daughter, upon returning to receive their prize, the little girl was munching on cookies and enjoying a juice box provided by a store owner. The mother raved about how welcoming all the businesses were and how Whitehorse "needs to do more" when the race starts there.

Local store owners had a good day with people coming to enjoy everything from accordion music to crafts. People got into the spirit of the event and business was booming. One owner summed it up by saying she had a "summer's day" of sales.

Events like the Yukon Quest Fest, Midnight Sun Festival and Winter Solstice are great for inviting people downtown. These festivals mark a critical tool in the short term strategies that the Downtown Association implements to ensure that over 60,000 people each year, come into our downtown area. In a city where 1/3 of our population rotates out every 3 years and many others may have not visited our downtown in months or years; these festivals mark an introduction to our area that leave warm memories of "downtown" and a brand recognition to bring them back again and again. While we keep firmly focused on our long term revitalization strategies and the hopes and dreams our entire community holds for Vision Fairbanks, it is important to remember how critical it is to reinforce "Downtown" a destination in the mind of the public.

March and April are the critical stepping stones for Vision Fairbanks. If you are not familiar with the plan, please visit [downtownfairbanks.com](http://downtownfairbanks.com) where you will find a link to view the community driven comprehensive vision for making everyday feel like a festival in downtown Fairbanks.

## Congratulations to the 2008 Yukon Quest Winner



## Lance Mackey – His 4th Consecutive Win Elapsed Time 10:12:14

### Yukon Quest Best Guess Winners

Mike Kenny– Whitehorse  
Bart LeBon– Fairbanks

These are the two winners who guess the elapsed time of the winning musher's team. They both received over \$300 and some great bragging rights!

Way to go Mike and Bart and a huge thank you to everyone who bought a \$5 ticket to support the Yukon Quest Fest.

## VISION FAIRBANKS—THE WORK CONTINUES

Bernardo Hernandez, director of the Fairbanks North Star Borough's Department of Community Planning, is a part of the Vision Fairbanks Urban Task Force. Here are his thoughts on getting Vision Fairbanks adopted:

"More than 1,000,000 square feet of retail has been constructed outside of the downtown area during the last few years. Residents lament the fact that there is no downtown grocery store, that downtown has lost the vast majority of its retail, and that downtown has lost the vigor and vitality it once had. Many remaining downtown merchants are struggling. The commercial viability of downtown is dubious if something isn't done to address this situation.

A partnership of the Downtown Association, the City of Fairbanks, and the Fairbanks North Star Borough decided to tackle this problem about 2 years ago. It was decided that a plan should be prepared that would stimulate and revitalize downtown. And it was decided that the plan had to be rooted in citizen participation.

Through the RFP process, one of the finest consultants on downtown revitalization in the nation was hired to do the plan. And due to the tremendous work of DTA staff, we had unprecedented citizen participation in the development of the plan. In fact, over the course of four pub-

lic workshops, more than 1000 people attended and joined the discussion on the plan.

Vision Fairbanks, the plan that revitalizes downtown Fairbanks, is now complete. But the work is not over. It has only begun. We now must go through the all important adoption process. Ultimately the Plan must be adopted by the Borough Assembly in order to move forward into the implementation phase.

During the month of March there will be work sessions and public hearings with the Fairbanks City Council and the Fairbanks North Star Borough Planning Commission. We must obtain favorable recommendations from the City and Commission so that they may be forwarded to the Assembly. We are hoping the Borough Assembly will make its decision during the month of April.

We need your help at this critical juncture. Let the decision makers know your feelings about the plan. This is truly a very important time to demonstrate your support. The City Council will be making its recommendation on March 24<sup>th</sup> and the Planning Commission will be making its recommendation on March 25<sup>th</sup>. Please contact the Downtown Association to ask how you might help."



### Welcome New 2008 DTA Members

*"Make new friends and keep the old. One is silver and the other gold."*

-Old Camp Song

A Downtown Log Cabin Hideaway  
Alaska Rag Company  
Arctic ATV Tours, LLC  
Chatanika Lodge  
Cornerstone Credit Services  
Dream Alaska B&B  
El Dorado Gold Mine  
Extended Stay Deluxe  
Inua Wool Shoppe  
Jorgensen's Frozen Custard  
Journey Christian Church  
Quilted with a View B&B  
Riverboat Discovery  
Santa's Vagabond Travel

### NOTES FROM THE DTA BOARD

It speaks volumes that our board members are all from different backgrounds and all have different reasons for supporting Vision Fairbanks. Here are some of their responses when asked what the Vision Fairbanks means to them and the community.

*Bart LeBon with Mt. McKinley Bank says:*

"My employer, Mt. McKinley Bank, was founded 43 years ago in downtown Fairbanks. Operating on Fourth Avenue since 1965, we will soon move into our new class "A" four-story office building located on the corner of 4th Avenue and Lacey Street. We believe that Downtown Fairbanks is the financial & legal center of the Fairbanks North Star Borough--but it can be so much more. The Vision Fairbanks Downtown Plan has something for everybody and deserves the full support of all Borough residents. A revitalized downtown will offer a variety of shopping options, restaurant choices, entertainment, recreation, business services--the possibilities

are limited only by our imagination. Embrace the "Vision" and help make Fairbanks an even greater place to live, work and play!"

*Mike Cook with Cook & Haugeberg LLC CPAs says:*

"Vision Fairbanks is an opportunity for people to enjoy a fresh, vibrant downtown, a place that compliments the economic and cultural activities of everywhere else in the City of Fairbanks and Borough."

*If Only... a fine store's owner, Georjean Seeliger says:*

"As a resident of Fairbanks since the 60's, I embrace our independent spirit and strong sense of community. We **are** the Golden Heart of Alaska. What makes a frontier town endearing also makes it frustrating. Vision Fairbanks to me is a coming of age for the city I truly love. With the plan, we look forward. With the

plan, we ensure a vibrant future for those who come after us. People are taking responsibility for what happens in Fairbanks. The Downtown Association has a commitment to implement the vision. The public has spoken and will continue to speak as the vision is implemented through the public process. Let's **choose** the direction of our community. Let's prevent undesirable change and start the process by implementing this simple and direct plan. As a business owner of If Only... a fine store, I can't predict how the outcome of this plan will affect my business as it stands today. I also know that my business will not be the same business 10 years from now. I have a flexible business plan that adjusts course regularly; I have a vision with strategies that change as needed. The Vision Fairbanks Downtown Plan is not a document cast in stone; it is fluid and can and will adjust over time. I realize that while change is sometimes uncomfortable, change is good. Let's work for positive change."

# DESIGN STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES



## Welcoming New Staff and Board Member:

**Jomo Stewart**  
Acting Executive Director

As former the Chief of Staff in Alaska State Legislature 2001-2003, Communications Director for the Alaska Gasline Port Authority 2005-2007, Jomo is an incredible asset to DTA. He is currently working as a Project Manager for the Fairbanks Economic Development Authority.

**Suzi Waugaman**  
Board Member

Suzi is no stranger to the DTA having served on its board in the past. She was the General Manager of the Carlson Center and later of the Chena River Convention Center. She brings to the board her experience and knowledge of being a lifelong Fairbanks resident.

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One of the big Vision Fairbanks concepts being discussed is whether, as a community, we should consider implementing some development standards and/or design guidelines.

Providing developers and investors with a guarantee of what will be on either side of them has seen a huge spike in downtown investment in many communities across the United States as developers recognize the benefit of certainties within a small core commercially zoned area in their towns.

General in nature, descriptive and not prescriptive in order to allow maximum architectural creativity; development standards can be a great tool in making sure that 50 years down the line, Fair-

banks retains all the wonderful character that we love about our idiosyncratic, individualistic architecture without losing any integrity.

Right now there are groups of individuals working on figuring out if there should be standards and guidelines and what they would look like for downtown Fairbanks. The groups are working on different categories that include retail and office space, public areas like the civic forest and Chena riverfront, circulation, and sustainability.

If you would like to get involved one of these groups or just want to learn more about the process of creating standards and guidelines, feel free to contact us.

## EXAMPLES OF DESIGN GUIDELINES FROM RACINE, WI



*Appropriate. Special features enhance the pedestrian experience and a scale that fits the historic structure of downtown.*



*Inappropriate. Not inviting and doesn't take towns personality into consideration. It is generic and could be built anywhere.*

## Get Ready to Blog on the DTA Website

A **weblog** (often **web log**, also known as a **blog**) is a website which contains periodic posts in a common webspace. The individual posts (which taken together are the weblog) either share a particular theme, or a single or small group of authors.  
—Webster's Online Dictionary

Since we first announced the new blog in January's newsletter, the community has taken great interest in this interactive tool. For some of us, technology can be scary. However, blogging is fun, easy, and a great resource for members. It is a space where you are free to share information, ideas, and strategies.

**Go to [downtownfairbanks.com/blog](http://downtownfairbanks.com/blog).** Everyone can read the comments, but only members get the exclusive benefit of being able to post to the site. If you are interested, simply contact us for your username and password. Not computer savvy? Don't worry. We can help you over the phone, or even set up a time to walk you through our blog in person. Before you know it, you will be a proficient blogger!

Please take this opportunity to liaise with other members. It is a chance to discuss downtown's hopes and dreams, and plans and schemes. A better community starts with better communication, and the DTA blog is just another tool we have to stay connected.

## WHAT ABOUT PARKING?

Ever notice how parking is a topic that gets everyone's attention? Right now, The Fairbanks Parking Authority, along with DTA, representatives from the City and local businesses are working on improving the situation.

Are you thinking of being downtown longer than the 2-hour parking limit? Why not consider using one of the many free parking locations throughout downtown, such as Sadler's and the Immaculate Conception parking lots? There are also daily or monthly parking rates available at the parking garage on 3rd and Noble.

As part of the community driven effort to revitalize downtown, we need to work on this together. It is a collective hope to see positive changes through public relations, and not policy changes. Together we can create a consumer friendly parking environment.