

Fairbanks. The city itself has exploded out of its original compact cluster of buildings, many of them old style log cabins, on a bend of the Chena River which flows through swampy flats into the Tanana. Many of the new houses are mobile homes; even the permanent structures are strictly functional and not very beautiful. In contrast some very attractive homes have been built on more elevated sites in woodland subdivisions on the outskirts of the city. New office blocks and apartment complexes recently completed or still under construction are dotted about the central area, while further out in the suburbs are large new shopping centres, mostly built by developers from outside Alaska and housing well known national supermarkets, restaurants, and department stores. A large new complex is under construction and some doubts have been expressed as to whether Fairbanks really needs any more such complexes. Very little development in retailing has occurred in the downtown area, where narrow streets are congested with traffic in spite of a one way street system. In spite of some substantial new buildings much of the town has the rough, raw untidy appearance of a hastily built camp, rather than a permanent community. And the frontier camp atmosphere is perpetuated by the disproportionately large number of scruffy saloons and bars downtown, mainly but not exclusively on 2nd Avenue, and the equally scruffy collection of people accumulated around them.

More telling than the visual appearance of the community is the psychological impact of the pipeline: the way local chronology is perceived in two periods - before and since the pipeline - and the wistful remarks of some that Fairbanks will never be the same again. But others say it is a great improvement on what it was.

Fairbanks has barely coped with the social and economic impacts of the construction of the pipeline and there is little evidence of overall planning for the impact situation.

Some generalisations can be drawn from the Fairbanks experience:

1. It is impossible to keep politics out of the impact of a development project, both the politics of the impact situ-