

Project Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

Project Name:	Waterfront and Economic Development Plan	Meeting No:	01
Project No.:	WHI-24-01	Date:	11/06/2024
Prepared By:	Linda Pringle	Time:	7:00 pm

Project Team:

Name	Organization	Contact
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Project Advisory Committee:

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Not-In-Attendance:

Charlie Howard	glacierjetski@gmail.com
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Peter Carlson	petercarlson99@yahoo.com
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Discussion:

Item Topic

1.0 **Welcome and Introductions (10 minutes)**

Aubrey Jurgerson: Interest area lies in recreation and waterfront related businesses.

Heather Brazelton: Homeowner at BTI and retired. Feels there is a lot of potential in Whittier and, with an outside view, sees a lot of potential for Whittier's waterfront.

Owen Ala: Interest area is with recreation and how Whittier can attract people across the state and world-wide. Has experience being on the Hilltop Ski Area board of recreation and related groups. Understands what a vision and goals can do to help fundraise and articulate that vision.

Tim Alderson: Anchorage resident and year-round harbor user (with his Ranger Tug). Has experience from Skagway with its evolution as a cruise port and tourism destination, with knowledge of the challenges and opportunities of accommodating cruise lines while maintaining local integrity/experience.

Meagan Zimpelmann: Interest area is in business development of the waterfront. Owns Whittier Marine Charters and Whittier Boat Rental. Lives in Whittier during the summers and raised kids in Whittier. Has a long-time connection to Whittier and the Prince William Sound (PWS).

2.0 **Project Overview (15 minutes)**

Background:

There are many untapped opportunities for the waterfront and a lot of ideas, with this process intended to develop direction to achieve opportunities. Challenges include limited space to achieve the goals and opportunities of the waterfront with the majority of waterfront lands owned by the

Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC). Currently, a land purchase or land swap is on the table so the City of Whittier is in control of more waterfront properties.

Main question: how do we get the highest and best use of the waterfront?

The project plan is to work with the community and surrounding communities through public engagement, a Project Advisory Committee (PAC), and stakeholder meetings to develop a high-level outlook and start developing a vision and achievable goals for the waterfront. Developing a Waterfront and Economic Development Plan (WEDP) will provide direction for funding opportunities. The plan will be important to communicate the desired outcomes to potential funders. The plan includes a collaborative process, founded within stakeholders and the community.

The goal for the land swap is to bring the Memorandum of Understanding forward at the November council meeting and present a bill in early 2025 to the legislature. Website Link:

<https://www.whittieralaska.gov/land-swap/>

Deliverables:

The following is a list of expected deliverables and events. The dates are based on current project planning, but are subject to change.

- Inventory and Assessment Document and Preliminary Economic Assessment: November 15, 2024
- Public Work Session: December 11, 2024
- Public Open House: January 15/16, 2025
- Preliminary Draft WEDP: March 21, 2025
- Draft WEDP: May 2, 2025
- 45-Day Review Period: May 5, June 19, 2025
- Public Information Meeting: May 13, 2025
- Final WEDP: August 8

3.0 Role of PAC (10 minutes)

- Attend PAC Meetings and Public Meetings
- Provide the project team with valuable insights and recommendations regarding the project.
- Participate in the process and consult with your peers to discuss and solicit feedback regarding the project plans and performance.
- Identify potential risks and issues that may impact the project's success and offer strategies for mitigating these risks and resolving issues.
- Review project deliverables and make recommendations.
- Communicate with the community to promote engagement and to keep the community informed throughout the project.
- Provide strategic direction and help to align the effort with the goals and objectives that are developed.

4.0 Communication Plan (10 minutes)

The following is a list of tentative PAC meeting dates. The dates are based on current project planning, and are subject to change based on the larger project or to optimize PAC participation.

- PAC Meeting #1 – Introductions: November 6
- PAC Meeting #2 – Review Initial Recommendations: TBD
- PAC Meeting #3 – Review Outcome of Public Meeting #1: TBD
- PAC Meeting #4 – Review Outcome of Public Meeting #2: January 15/16, 2025
- PAC Meeting #5 – Present Draft Plan: March 26, 2025
- PAC Meeting #6 – Review Comments: April 8, 2025
- PAC Meeting #7 – Review Public Input for Final WEDP: July 9, 2025

5.0 **Question and Answer Session (10 minutes)**

How should the PAC be sharing materials and soliciting feedback?

- Interested community members should be directed to the City of Whittier website as the primary information hub where information and documents will be made available. A digital comment collector will be available as a link on <https://www.whittieralaska.gov/wedp>.

How does the WEDP tie in with the Comprehensive Plan?

- The intent of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide a high-level strategic direction for Whittier. The WEDP will provide more focused planning direction for the lands within the project area(s).

How will current leases be affected by the land swap?

- It is ultimately a change of the landlord. Currently, the ARRC owns the lands, the City of Whittier leases from ARRC (master lease), and the City subleases to the current leaseholders. As a component of the land swap, all lands will be appraised (note: appraisals are currently supposed to happen every 5 years).

6.0 **Next Steps (5 minutes)**

The following is a list of expected upcoming deliverables and events. The dates are based on current project planning, but are subject to change.

- Inventory and Assessment Document and Preliminary Economic Assessment: November 15
- Stakeholder Outreach: November/December
- Prepare for Public Meeting #1: TBD

PAC Work Items:

- Review the City of Valdez Comprehensive Waterfront Master Plan: <chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcglclefindmkaj/https://www.valdezak.gov/DocumentCenter/View/7988/Waterfront-Master-Plan>
- Review and identify individual goals for the planning process to share with the committee

End of Meeting