

## Passenger Transportation Focus Group Meeting

**Project Name:** Waterfront and Economic Development Plan  
**Project No.:** WHI-24-01  
**Prepared By:** Linda Pringle

**Date:** 12/09/2024  
**Time:** 3:00 pm

### Project Team:

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### Focus Group:

Name	Organization	Contact
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Adam Steele	BAC Transportation	asteele@bactrans.com
Travis Taylor	Premier Alaska Tours	<a href="mailto:travis.taylor@touralaska.net">travis.taylor@touralaska.net</a>
Jake Maxwell	Chenega Regional Development Group	jake.maxwell@chenega.com

### Discussion:

#### Item Topic

#### 1.0 Introductions

##### Salmon Berry Tours

- Works mostly with waterfront through the summer to handle cruise ship transfers. 10-20 people a day in either direction. Utilize Lazy Otter as well (March and October)

##### Chenega Regional Development Group

- Operate with a couple of slips in Cliffside Marine that acts as a gateway to PWS. Own lodges in PWS and use Whittier to transport personnel and visitors back and forth. Currently, dealing with a pinch point operating out of Cliffside Marina.

##### Premier Alaska Tours

- Local Alaska tour company that has 3-day to week-long packaged itineraries. They take groups to and from the cruise ship docks and also work with Lazy Otter and Phillips Glacier Cruises to transport passengers.

##### BAC Transportation

- Cruise ship transfers in Whittier throughout the summer.

#### 2.0 Limitations or Impacts to Quality of Experience

Jake Maxwell: Limited parking is an issue and trying to channel where recreational people are going and tourist people are going.

Brendan: A designated location for small group transfers would help to minimize conflicts with the larger transfer operations and streamline the loading/unloading process.

Travis Taylor: Challenging to operate around the larger motor coaches, primarily for drop off at the Phillips/26 offices. At this time, turnaround for them is in the Phillips parking lot. No clear designation for where you should stage for loading/unloading or where you should wait. Staging and pick-up are very different operations.

- Homer Harbor can act as an example of a location that gets a lot of RVs, motor coaches, and traffic congestion. If Whittier is able to improve their waterfront area to draw more Alaskans to visit, this will increase congestion similar to Homer's issues.

- Princess ramp is covered and provides some protection from the elements; however, new ramp at Huna Totem is not.
- Covered waiting areas are really important due to the exposure to weather in Whittier.
- Premier Alaska Tours will at times take groups to the museum, but there aren't a lot of attractions in Whittier that would provide for a full day or half day itinerary.

Adam Steele: Operates with motor coaches and at times a sprinter van, but finds it very difficult to connect with clients and collect luggage.

- Need better designated areas for pickup and to connect with guests, better efficiency for getting luggage.

Travis Taylor: Good example to follow is Seward, near the Harbormaster Office. It needs to be double the size, but provides a better example of efficiency than Homer.

- There is no designated spot that everyone knows to go for passenger transfers (Where do you catch the bus in Whittier?)

### **3.0 Key Improvements**

Travis Taylor: Covered and designated areas for pick-up. Improvements to the quality of experience between the ship and the bus.

- Better designation for recreation users/tours to drop-off or unload/load kayaks.
- Better attractions if there is a goal to get people to stay in Whittier. There isn't much to do once you have stopped at the coffee shop and visited the museum.

Brendan: A brewery or better restaurants will provide people with something to do and places to pass the day.

End of Meeting