



Project Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

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

Meeting No: 03
Date: 1/16/2025
Time: 6:00 pm

Project Team:

Name	Organization	Contact
Linda Pringle	Corvus Design	lpringle@corvus-design.com
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Project Advisory Committee:

In Attendance

Aubrey Jurgerson	a.jurgerson@gmail.com
Charlie Howard	glacierjetski@gmail.com
Heather Brazelton	heather.brazelton@gmail.com
Owen Ala	owen.l.ala@gmail.com
Meagan Zimplemann	mazimpelmann@alaska.edu

Not in Attendance

Tim Alderson	tjalderson@mac.com
Mike Adams	stillchummin@gmail.com

Discussion:

Item Topic

- 1.0** Owen: how can we make Whittier a year-round City.
- Is there a way that Whittier can solve the housing issue in Girdwood? Commute from Whittier to Girdwood
 - Promoting building up rather than spread – zero lot lines
 - Push parking to the Head of the Bay (HOB), move it out of the harbor
 - Parking garage
 - Development of the tank farm or partnering with ARRC to provide services for the community
 - Parking, boat services, etc. Stuff that does not require a lot of infrastructure or development.

Meagan: obtaining insurance on leased land in avalanche or tsunami zones is difficult.

Owen: Changes to the land use has to think about existing businesses to make sure future plans don't hurt them.

- When businesses thrive, communities thrive.
- It is important to have businesses succeed, but equally important to have the appropriate land use for an area

Scott: Unique challenges for land and weather

- Businesses aren't allowed to develop foundations
- Need a balance in decision making ability. What balance will create a healthy Whittier community?

Owen: Is this a plan that will achieve something and inspire people or will Whittier continue to address the same low-hanging fruit without looking at the big picture.

- Need to develop a plan that inspires people and expands on Whittier's unique elements (reference Hilltop Ski Resort Plan).



- Creating a beautiful vision that will resonate with people and will help gain financial support in implementing the plan.

Heather: need a balance so that the plan doesn't overdo it and overwhelm the people who live here.

Peter: reference to StrongTowns which plans for a phased implementation to balance the scale of improvements

Scott: fear is that Whittier becomes a Westmark community dependent on tourists.

- It would be good to pickup more in the shoulder seasons: berry picking, alpine skiing, snowmachining, hiking – provide something for Alaskans to do here
- Making sure to look at what the carrying capacity of PWS is, not just Whittier.

Meagan: worried that it will become like Veil, Colorado and that too many improvements will cut out locals price-wise. The weather in Whittier makes it difficult to attract crowds in other seasons.

- Feels that Whittier is a 'Nautical Truck Stop'.

Homework: Are there small towns with a balanced tourism market and thriving local business economy?

- There are a lot of references to what Whittier shouldn't become, can we provide some references for what Whittier could become?

Scott: It is important to create a capacity that is good for Whittier rather than accommodating the needs of people coming to Whittier.

- WHITTIER IS FULL!
- Is there a way to have a sign on the Bear Valley side of the tunnel that says 'We Are Full'. Maybe provide parking on the Bear Valley side of the tunnel and partner with a shuttle to shuttle people into Whittier.
- Whittier is a bush village coming out of the Cold War. It is for Lazy Alaskans. It is a Gulag Town.

Charlie: Whittier's character is being unique, it is what he uses to sell Whittier as a business owner.

Big Question: What is Whittier's identity, who do we serve? What is the character of Whittier or what are the characteristics that will make it feel like Whittier?

Owen: If development is done right, it doesn't threaten the character of a town.

- Character is the land and the population and as long as that remains it can't be lost.
- If people keep fearing development, it will continue to stay a truck stop place where people come to boat, dump their trash, and leave.

Charlie:

- A huge hit in the town is the trail that was developed from the waterfall to the railroad tracks (Creekside Trail). This is a trail mentioned to visitors a lot.
- Hiking is an easy extra sell. Horsetail Falls Trail – a lot of good maintenance has been done here. Salmon viewing, easy trail. An easy to do trail before people head out on tours.
- There is a legitimate concern about the loss of character. It is important to lift up and support local business development, not the national chains.
- Preserving resident's access to the waterfront.

Owen: Whittier is already catering to the cruise industry. It is important to keep ahead of that so that locals can maintain the upper hand and benefit from the cruise industry, rather than selling out to the cruise industry.

Next Steps:

- Project Advisory Committee: What is the character of Whittier? Think on this and provide some feedback to the project team. Are there examples of places who have done it right? We



have heard a lot of bad examples, lets look at some good examples of what Whittier could strive to become.

- Consultants: What We Heard Report – to be developed and shared with the Project Advisory Committee.

Schedule:

- What We Heard Summary: submitted to City January 31 for review and comment. Circulated with PAC once approved.
- Preliminary Draft WEDP: March 21, 2025
 - Present Draft to PAC: March 26, 2025 (exact date TBD)
 - PAC Feedback: April 8, 2025 (exact date TBD)

End of Meeting