

Whitter Comprehensive Plan 2020

Submitted to:

City of Whittier

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Accepted by City Council on

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Submitted by:



Table of Contents

Executive Summary	5
Chapter 1: Introduction and Plan Overview.....	6
Purpose of the Plan.....	6
Contents of the Plan	7
Methodologies and Public Involvement.....	7
Vision Statement	8
Chapter 2: Historical and Background Information	9
The City of Whittier – Historic Information	9
Geography and Topography	11
Climate.....	11
Flora and Fauna	13
Chapter 3: Demographics, Cost of Living, and Housing	14
The People of Whittier – Population.....	14
Current Population.....	14
Projected Population.....	14
Cost of Living in Whittier	15
Housing	16
Buckner Building.....	18
Chapter 4: City Administration and Municipal Services	19
City Administration	19
City Council.....	19
Planning and Zoning Commission	19
Port and Harbor Commission	20
City-Owned Facilities.....	20
Municipal Services	20
Public Safety.....	20
Public Works.....	21
Chapter 5: Education, Recreation, and Non-Municipal Facilities	22
Education	22
Educational Awards.....	23
Recreation	23
Non-Municipal Facilities.....	24
Prince William Sound Museum	24
Non-denominational Christian Churches.....	24
Health	24
Chapter 6: City Revenues and Expenses	25
Governmental Funds 2018	25
Revenues	25
Expenditures.....	25
Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund	27

Enterprise Funds 2011-2018	28
Chapter 7: Utility Services.....	31
City-Provided Public Utilities	31
Water.....	31
Sewer.....	31
Public and Private Utility Services.....	31
Electric Power Supply	31
Telecommunications	32
Solid Waste Services.....	32
Natural Gas.....	32
Chapter 8: Transportation	33
Land Transportation.....	33
Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel.....	33
Road System in Whittier.....	34
Pedestrian and Bicycle System.....	35
Shotgun Cove Road	36
Trails	37
Railroad	38
Freight	39
Marine Transportation.....	40
Rail Barge Dock.....	40
Cruise Ships	41
Ferry System.....	43
Small Boat Harbor	44
Private Marina.....	46
Air Transportation	46
Airport	46
Chapter 9: Land Ownership, Land Use, and Land Management	47
Land Ownership.....	47
Federal Government	47
State of Alaska and Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC).....	47
City of Whittier.....	47
Chugach Alaska Corporation	48
Private Land.....	48
Leased Land	51
Existing Land Use	51
Industrial Use	51
Residential.....	51
Commercial	51
Public.....	51
Open and Recreational Space	52
Vacant.....	52
Future Land Use.....	52

Emerald Cove and Shotgun Cove	53
Land Use Regulation, Zoning, Cooperative Agreements, Land Lease and Management	56
Land Use Regulation.....	56
Zoning Ordinance	56
Cooperative Agreements	58
Municipal Land Disposal Program.....	58
Land Leases	59
Covenants.....	59
Chapter 10: Security	60
United States Coast Guard and Whittier Area Maritime Security (WAMS) Committee.....	60
Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)	61
Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)	61
Whittier Cruise Ship Terminal and Cliffside Marina	61
Chapter 11: Current and Future Economy	62
Current Economic Indicators	62
Local Government and School District	64
Whittier Businesses	65
Recreation and Tourism	65
Day-Cruise and Charter Operations	66
Cruise Ship Operations.....	67
Recreational and Commercial Boating.....	68
Other Recreational Activities	68
Winter Recreation	69
Commercial Fishing	70
Marine Services	70
Future Economic Development Opportunities	71
Shotgun Cove	71
Chapter 12: Stakeholder Interviews, Community Visioning, and Working Groups	73
Stakeholder Interviews	73
Major Themes and Stakeholder Suggestions.....	73
Areas of Alignment.....	74
Diverging Ideas.....	75
Whittier Community Visioning Meeting.....	76
Collecting Community Input.....	77
Community Working Groups	80
Public Review and Comment	81
Chapter 13: Action Plan - Community Goals, Objectives, and Implementation	
Recommendations	82
2020 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Recommendations	82
Action Plan Narrative	83
Focus Area 1: Tourism.....	83
Focus Area 2: Beautification.....	84

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Focus Area 3: Harbor District	84
Focus Area 4: Head of the Bay	87
Focus Area 5: Business Development	89
Ongoing / Future Projects	89
Detailed Action Plan with Recommendations	89
Appendices	95
Appendix A: Acknowledgments	95
Appendix B: Acronyms	96
Appendix C: List of Figures, Tables, Exhibits, and Photos	97
Appendix D: 2012 Comprehensive Plan Goal / Policy / Action Scorecard.....	100

Executive Summary

The 2020 Whittier Comprehensive Plan provides a thorough review of the City of Whittier, Alaska, and outlines goals and objectives for the next five years. The planning process took place between March 2019 and January 2020 and serves as an update to the 2012 Whittier Comprehensive Plan.

The purpose of the 2020 comprehensive planning process was to engage with the community and receive input to create a plan that reflects the future needs and desires of the Whittier community. Additionally, the plan provides a vision for the future of Whittier, outlines clear priorities, and balances growth potential with practical limitations. This plan is designed to be a guide for the community, City officials and administrators as they continue detailed project planning and development, build partnerships for implementation, and source funding over the next five years.

“Our vision for Whittier includes preserving our unspoiled environment, while improving amenities for all those who live and visit here.”

The planning process included an update of the historical, background, and economic state of Whittier from the previous 2012 Comprehensive Plan. The 2020 Plan catalogs the significant changes that have taken place in Whittier over the past eight years. These changes include:

- Completion of new Public Safety Building
- Acquisition of the DeLong Dock through a land swap
- Completion of Phases III and IV of Shotgun Cove Road
- Upgrade of water and sewer infrastructure to meet current and future system demands
- Completion of the *Whittier City Park Master Plan*
- Completion of the *Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment* with the Army Corp of Engineers for the Head of the Bay
- Reached an agreement to acquire previous tank farm property at the Head of the Bay

The development of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan involved engagement between the City of Whittier and the Whittier community. This process included:

- Stakeholder interviews
- Community meetings
- Community-led work groups
- Public presentations
- Public comment on the draft plan

As part of the planning process, a Focus Area Action Plan was created to serve as a guide for the City of Whittier over the next five years. Focus areas within the Action Plan include Tourism, Beatification, Harbor District, Business Development, and the Head of the Bay. A set of goals, objectives, and recommended actions were developed for each Focus Area along with recommendations on how to maintain progress and adapt the plan to new developments and community needs over the next five years.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Plan Overview

Chapter 1 provides an overview of the 2020 Whittier Comprehensive Plan including the purpose of the plan, the contents of the plan, methodologies, public involvement, and the guiding vision statement behind the Comprehensive Plan.

Purpose of the Plan

The Whittier Comprehensive Plan was last updated in 2012. Over the past eight years, significant developments and advancements have altered the community's infrastructure, economy, and plans for the future. Significant developments include:

- Completion of a new Public Safety Building
- Acquisition of the DeLong Dock through a land swap
- Completion of Phases III and IV of Shotgun Cove Road
- Upgrade of water and sewer infrastructure to meet current and future system demands
- Completion of the *Whittier City Park Master Plan*
- Completion of the *Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment* with the Army Corp of Engineers for the Head of the Bay
- Reached an agreement to acquire the previous tank farm property at the Head of the Bay

Considering the significant developments within the community of Whittier since 2012, the City of Whittier initiated the 2020 Comprehensive Planning process to provide a new, updated, and current comprehensive plan for the City of Whittier. The new 2020 Comprehensive Plan was developed between March 2019 and January 2020 with the purpose of providing the City of Whittier direction and guidance for the community's future development and growth over the next five years¹.

The planning and revision process directly engaged key stakeholders including the City of Whittier, City Council, City Commissions, local businesses, as well as residents and members of the Whittier community. These stakeholders were an integral part of the comprehensive planning process; defining desired outcomes and guiding the development and shape of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. As a result of their direct input, the 2020 Comprehensive Plan reflects the needs not only of the City, but of the community.

The 2020 Plan considers short-, medium-, and long-term needs of the community, and will guide the City of Whittier over the next five years while continuing to focus on the City of Whittier's long-term (20-year) goals. The 2020 Plan is intended to actively adapt as it is implemented and to grow with the ever-changing needs and priorities of Whittier and the members of its community.

¹ The 2020 Whittier Comprehensive Plan was funded through the City's General Fund. In accordance with the Whittier Municipal Code, the Comprehensive Plan must be reviewed every two years and updated every five years.

Contents of the Plan

The 2020 Plan includes historical and background information on Whittier and the surrounding Prince William Sound area. The information includes data on demographics, economics, transportation, cost of living, public services, financial data, education, parks and recreation, transportation, security, land use, and administrative functions and policies. The process of City and community engagement in developing the plan is described, along with the resulting Five-Year Action Plan and Recommendations for Implementation.

Methodologies and Public Involvement

The City of Whittier guided and directly engaged in the development of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, working closely with Catalyst Consulting to complete extensive community engagement, focus area planning, and final document review. The Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission approved the plan before submission to the Whittier City Council for adoption, in accordance with Whittier City Code.

In order to focus inputs and efforts on the 2020 plan, a Comprehensive Plan Core Team comprising City staff and Focus Area Leads was assembled, which included City Council and Planning and Zoning Commission members. This team offered planning guidance and highlighted important changes that have occurred in Whittier since the 2012 Plan. Additionally, the Comprehensive Plan Core Team reviewed important documents prior to public release, reviewed draft plan content, and provided essential background information for the creation of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Methodologies involved in the 2020 Comprehensive Planning process included:

- Collaborations between City staff, City Council, City Commissions, and the Comprehensive Plan Core Team
- Stakeholder interviews
- A community meeting with live community polling
- Meeting with key community organizations, such as the Whittier Chamber of Commerce and the Prince William Sound Museum to gain support and feedback
- Review of past Comprehensive Plans, including a comprehensive status review of the 2012 Plan Goals, Policies, and Actions (see Appendix D)
- Public work groups to develop Focus Area Action Plan elements
- Community review of the Action Plan
- Public comment period of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Draft
- Review of other relevant plans

In order to assure broad community awareness and gather comprehensive input, community engagement was solicited at the following public meetings:

- Whittier City Council, Comprehensive Plan Work Session - April 23, 2019
- Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission - May 1, 2019
- Whittier Chamber of Commerce - May 10, 2019

- Community Visioning Meeting – May 15, 2019
- Whittier City Council - November 12, 2019
- Community Open House – October 30, 2019
- Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission - November 13, 2019
- Whittier City Council, Comprehensive Plan Work Session Final Approval - January 21, 2020 (scheduled)

To initiate the public process, a community visioning meeting was held on May 15, 2019 in the Whittier School gymnasium with 34 community members and stakeholders in attendance. This meeting gave all stakeholders an equal voice to establish common goals and strategies for Whittier’s future. Basic data was gathered during the meeting via a text-message-based polling platform with real-time results. The collected data was available immediately for use in a visioning exercise, during which community members outlined a vision for the future of Whittier with short-term community goals that reflected long-term desired outcomes.

Through the community visioning process, community members identified tourism, city beautification, the Head of the Bay, and the harbor district as key areas of importance. Community members found alignment between their ideas and desires for further development, growth, and improvements across these focus areas. More information regarding the first community visioning meeting including goals, community input, and outcomes can be found in Chapter 12.

Based on the focus areas highlighted at the community visioning meeting, work groups were formed to further identify goals, objectives, and actions for the City of Whittier’s 2020 Action Plan, found in Chapter 13 of this document. Work group members were identified and invited to participate by a work group lead and represented a broad range of opinions and ideas from the community. Work groups were also open to the public, and action plans developed by the work groups were open for public comment before finalization and inclusion in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Vision Statement

The following vision statement developed for the 2005 Comprehensive Plan was reviewed during the 2020 Comprehensive Planning process and was reaffirmed:

“We are a distinctive community with strong ties to our natural setting. Uniquely positioned as a gateway to the wonders of Prince William Sound and strategically located for multi-modal transportation of people and cargo, our location drives our economy and provides outstanding recreational opportunities for our residents and visitors.

Our vision for Whittier includes preserving our unspoiled environment, while improving amenities for all those who live and visit here. We see a Whittier with full-time access and ample, first-rate facilities to attract visitors and improve the quality of life for residents of all ages. We see a beautiful, clean Whittier with a self-sufficient economy and opportunity for local ownership of land, homes and businesses.”

Chapter 2: Historical and Background Information

Chapter 2 provides a summary of important historical information, climate, weather, and biological information.

The City of Whittier – Historic Information

The City of Whittier, Alaska, is approximately 47 air miles or 62 road or rail miles southeast of Anchorage. Whittier is located near the head of Passage Canal, a fjord of Prince William Sound. The nearest major communities to Whittier are: Girdwood, 24 road miles northwest; Anchorage, 62 road miles northwest; Valdez, 90 air or water miles northeast; Cordova, 100 air or water miles east; Seward, 98 road miles southwest; and Soldotna, 109 road miles southwest. Whittier is the closest year-round, ice-free port to Anchorage and is a focal point for marine activity and freight transfer for sea-train barges servicing Southcentral Alaska. Whittier is located within the Valdez-Cordova Census Area in an unorganized borough and is just outside the boundaries of the Anchorage Borough and the Kenai Peninsula Borough.



The Whittier townsite lies on the south shore of Passage Canal and covers approximately one square mile. The city limits encompass a total of 17 square miles, including most of Passage Canal and undeveloped land eastward to Shotgun Cove. (Figure 2)

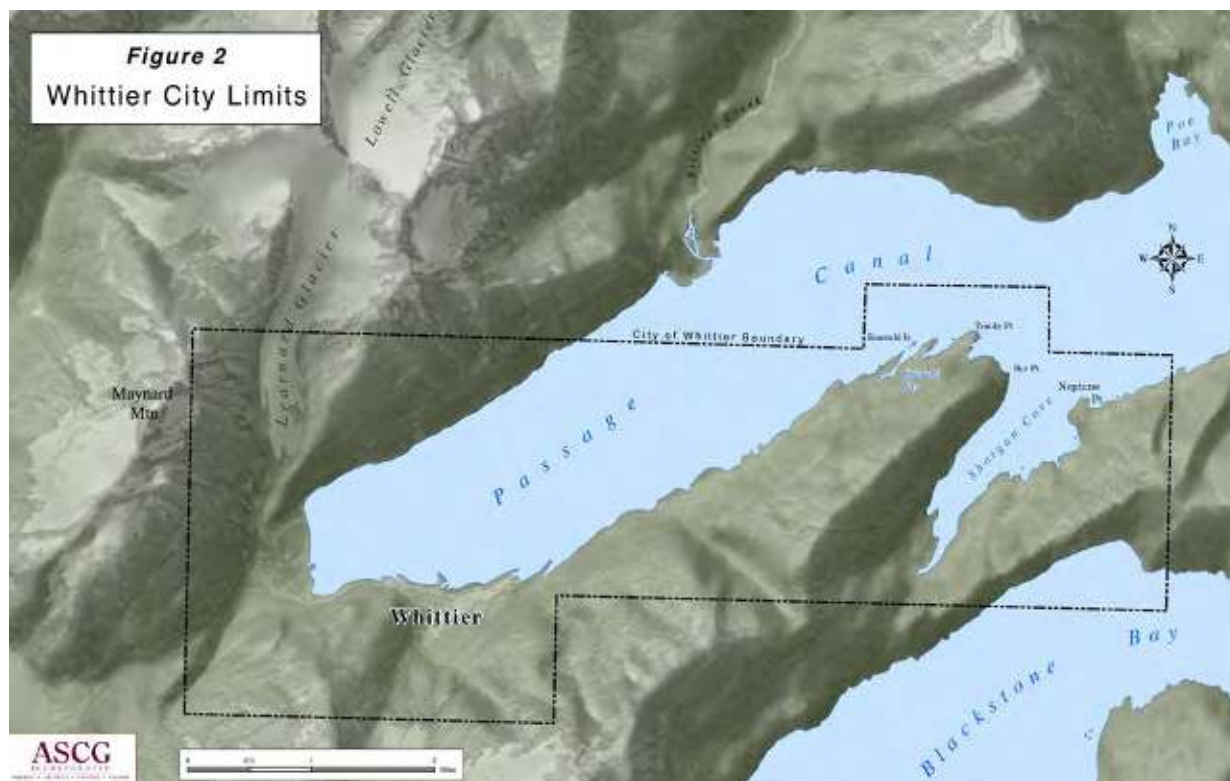


Figure 2: Whittier City Limits

Whittier's unique geographical setting is on a relatively narrow fjord surrounded by snow-capped mountains and glaciers. Because of the city's location, Whittier is subject to strong winds and weather common to both coastal mountains and open coast. The normally overcast skies formed by trapped clouds at the junction of the Chugach and Kenai Ranges made Whittier a difficult target for enemy bombers during World War II. This unique cloud cover, along with Whittier's year-round, ice-free port, made it a strategic location during the Second World War. The U.S. Army moved troops and supplies through Whittier to the Southwest Alaskan Aleutian Islands.

The Alaska Engineering Commission first envisioned the community of Whittier in 1914. It was not until the late 1940s that the Army constructed deep-water port facilities, massive concrete warehouses, a tank farm fuel storage facility, two major complexes to house troops, and a small network of roads, streets, and utility systems. At the height of military activities in the late 1950s, there were over 1,300 people living in Whittier. The final military transport left Whittier in October 1960. Private businesses suffered without their military clientele, and the population dropped to 65 people by the year 1963. Today, a little over 200 people live in Whittier year-round.

Geography and Topography

The Whittier city-limit boundary covers approximately 17 square miles (nearly 11,000 acres). However, with glaciers and open water covering approximately 20% of that area, only around 8,000 acres exist as land area. With grades in excess of 33%, some of this existing land area cannot be easily developed due to its steepness.

The subsurface composition in Whittier consists primarily of slate and greywacke, which is a tight, non-porous, dark-colored sandstone. Except for the Whittier townsite and Head of Passage Canal deltas, the topography of the area generally rises abruptly from the shoreline at a grade of 30% to 60%, rising to mountain altitudes ranging from 3,500 to 4,500 feet. Protrusions of bedrock and rock faces are numerous throughout the area. The area's topography has and will continue to influence and limit the amount and type of growth and development that can occur in Whittier.

Whittier is located next to the head of Passage Canal, which is one of the most westerly fjords within Prince William Sound. Near the Whittier townsite, Passage Canal is an average of a mile and a half wide and has a depth of over 600 feet. The head of Passage Canal is also referred to as the Head of the Bay by local residents and is referenced as both throughout this document.

Tidal conditions for Passage Canal are similar to other areas in Prince William Sound. The water depth increases very rapidly from the shoreline, except in the delta areas. Ice does not form in Passage Canal during the winter, though thin layers of ice can form on structures and facilities exposed to ocean spray. Whittier's port can be subject to strong winds, fog, and heavy precipitation.

Whittier is in a highly seismic area. Of the earthquakes of magnitude five or greater that occurred in the United States between 1995 and 2015, 85% took place in Alaska². Whittier's hazard level is very high, at a 40% to 80% risk³. In 1964, the second-strongest earthquake ever recorded to-date shook Southcentral Alaska at a Richter Scale magnitude of 9.2. The epicenter was in Unakwik Inlet in Prince William Sound, less than 40 miles northeast of Whittier.

Climate

Due to Whittier's location, the City is often subject to strong winds. Wind velocity typically ranges from 30 to 50 plus miles per hour and can blow for long periods of time. The wind can create snowdrifts that cover buildings, cars, and streets. During these periods of strong winds, outdoor activity is severely limited.

Temperatures generally range from 23 to 31 degrees Fahrenheit in the winter and 51 to 61 in the summer months as seen in Exhibit 1.

² "Are you prepared for the next big EARTHQUAKE in Alaska?"

https://earthquake.alaska.edu/sites/default/files/are-you-prepared_Nov2016-web.pdf

³ Risk is defined as "Probabilistic ground motion with a 2% probability of exceedance in 50 years for peak ground acceleration." Risk range of very low (0%-2%), up to medium (14%-20%), up to very high (80%+).

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Exhibit 1: Average Temperature (1942-2011) ⁴

Whittier's total precipitation stays relatively constant throughout the year, with July being the driest month with an average of 11 inches of precipitation. As noted in Exhibit 2, Whittier typically sees snowfall between the months of September and the end of May.

December is Whittier's wettest month, with a little over 23 inches of precipitation being typical during the month. During March, at the peak of Whittier's snow depth, ground snow accumulation can be up to four feet. Total annual precipitation is 16.3 feet, 21.4 feet of snowfall, and an average snow depth of 16 inches.

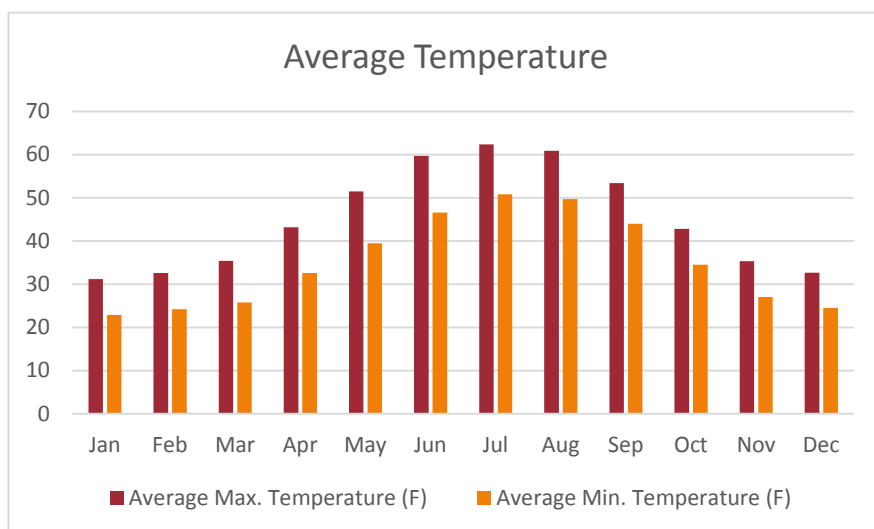
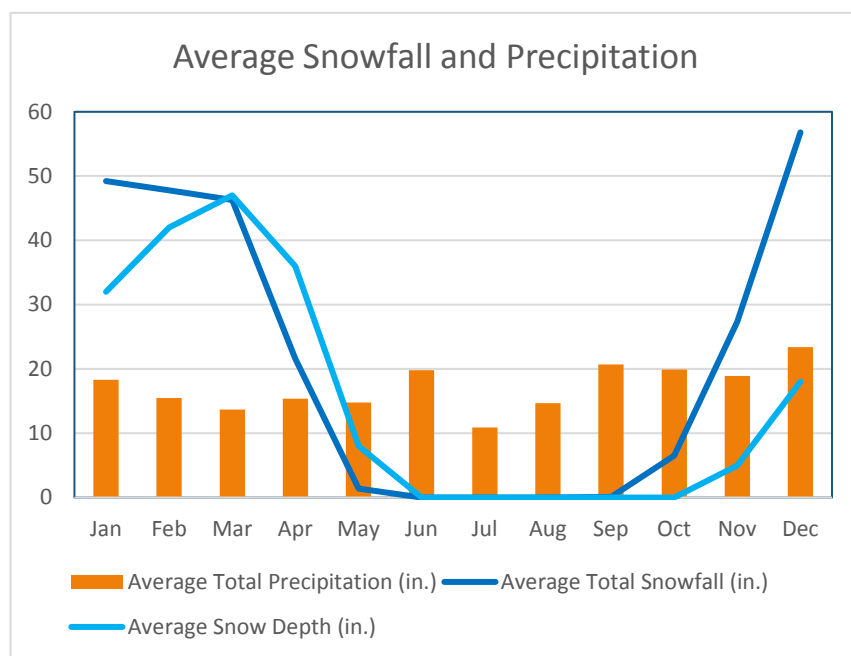


Exhibit 2: Average Snowfall and Precipitation (1942-2011) ⁵

Whittier's maritime climate and average high temperature of 31 degrees Fahrenheit during the winter months can mean quick changes from snow to rain and vice versa. Snow removal, snow load, and severe icing are concerns during the winter months. Snow accumulation can damage buildings and endanger small crafts moored at the harbor.



⁴ Alaska Department of Transportation, Whittier Weather <http://tunnel.alaska.gov/weather.shtml> and Western Regional Climate Center <https://wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?ak9829>.

⁵ Alaska Department of Transportation: Whittier Weather via Western Regional Climate Center, <http://tunnel.alaska.gov/weather.shtml>

The high snowfall, high winds, and steep mountain slopes result in frequent avalanches in the area. Avalanches near the Whittier tunnel portals have resulted in tunnel closures, damaged and destroyed facilities, and buried equipment, all which limit access for residents and visitors when they occur.



Photo 1: Whittier Core Area

Flora and Fauna

The predominant tree cover in the area is 80% Sitka Spruce with some Western Hemlock. Growth rates in the fjords of Prince William Sound are generally very slow, and many trees in these areas can take 50 years to reach a significant size. Trees in this area typically reach approximately 14 inches in diameter and 55 feet in height. Regeneration is a slow and haphazard process on the steep slopes of the area.

Prince William Sound hosts a variety of fish and other forms of marine life. The most common fish include rockfish, flounder, halibut, and all five species of Pacific salmon. Crab, shrimp, and clams are also native to the area.

Whales, porpoises, seals, sea otters, and sea lions can also be seen in Passage Canal during certain periods of the year. Black bears and occasional wolves, coyotes, and mountain goats are the most predominant large land animals in the area. Snowshoe hares, porcupines, beavers, river otters, mink, marmots, squirrels, and weasels are common small mammals.

Migratory birds such as geese, ducks, and cranes use Portage Pass in crossing the Coast Range between Prince William Sound and Western Alaska. Some waterfowl remain in the Whittier area year-round. A large rookery on the north side of Passage Canal contains thousands of gulls and kittiwakes. This rookery is highly accessible and is often visited by boat tours and recreational boaters alike. Bald eagles and ptarmigan are also common to the area.

The United States Forest Service (USFS) reported that since 2012 black slugs have become established in Whittier. Black slugs are a non-indigenous species and their presence negatively affects the area.⁶

⁶ Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan: Final Environmental Impact Statement, pg. 187, https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd658678.pdf

Chapter 3: Demographics, Cost of Living, and Housing

Chapter 3 discusses current and projected population, Whittier’s labor force, housing infrastructure, and local cost of living.

The People of Whittier – Population

Current Population

The last official population count was 220, as recorded during the 2010 Census. These figures will be updated once the results of the 2020 Census become available.

As shown in Exhibit 3, the median age in Whittier during the 2010 Census was reported as 48.

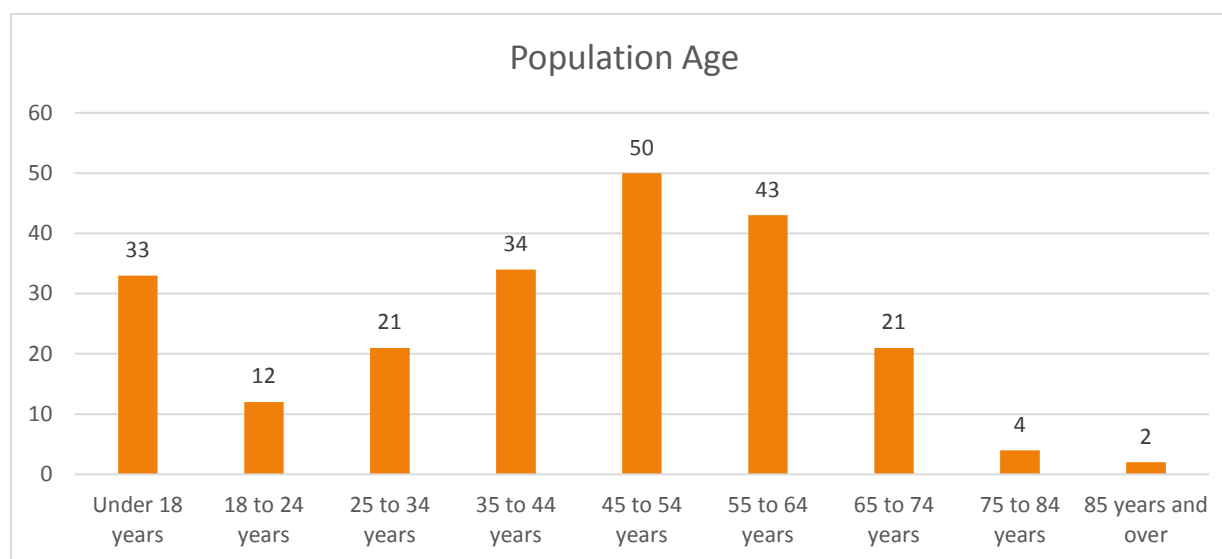


Exhibit 3: Population Age in Whittier (2010) ⁷

As with many small Alaskan communities, the population of Whittier varies dramatically by season. With the opening of the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel to vehicle traffic in the summer of 2000 and the return of cruise ships in 2004, Whittier experienced, and continues to experience, an influx of seasonal workers for fish processing, construction, recreation, and other seasonal employment opportunities.

Projected Population

Whittier is the only community within the Prince William Sound region that saw population growth between 2000 and 2010. With a population gain of 38 people between 2000 and 2010, Whittier saw a population increase of over 20% in that time period. This is in contrast with the

⁷ U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

rest of the Prince William Sound region that saw nearly a 4% population decrease over the same time period.⁸

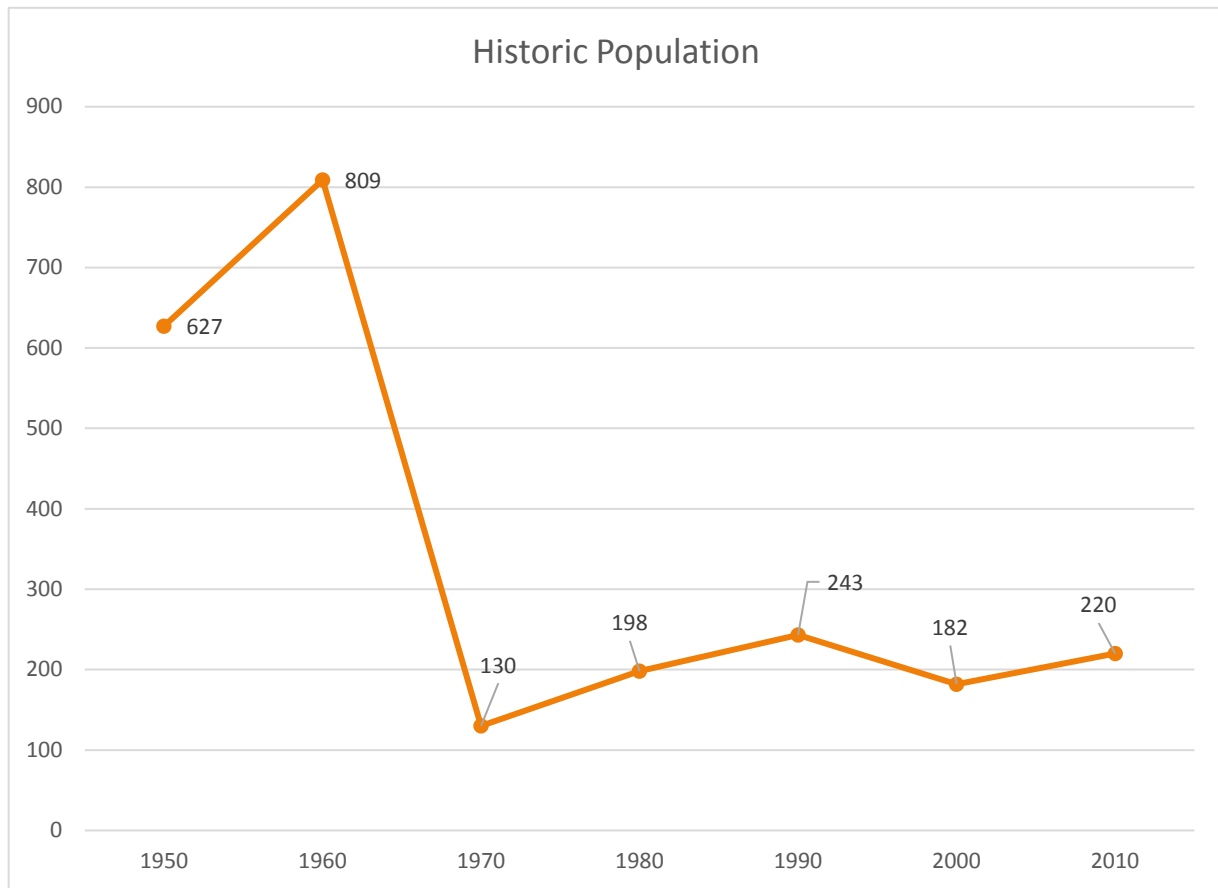


Exhibit 4: Whittier Historic Population (1950-2010)⁹

Exhibit 4 shows Whittier's historic population over the past 60 years. Since the abrupt population decline in the 1960s when the military left, the population has remained relatively stable with a slight growth trend.

Cost of Living in Whittier

Compared with many other communities in the state, the cost of purchasing housing in Whittier is relatively inexpensive. In 2016, the gross rent in Whittier was \$815 per month and the median housing value was \$66,100. These costs are slightly increased from 2010, when the

⁸ Sound Opportunities: Economic Growth for the Prince William Sound Region, https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/6/pub/PWSEDD_CEDS2016-2021.pdf?ver=2018-10-09-143321-893

⁹ U.S. Census Bureau

median housing value was \$55,000 and the gross rent was \$700.¹⁰ According to the *Prince William Sound Economic Development District Sound Opportunities Public Comment* completed in 2019, with the exception of Chenega Bay, Whittier has some of the most affordable housing in the region.

At both Begich Towers and Whittier Manor, condominium fees are assessed by unit size. Condominium fees include all local utilities, including electricity, sewer, water, and garbage.

Of the apartments and condominiums available for residential purposes, many are vacant in the winter months. Whittier's housing occupancy rate is high in the summer, with transient workers occupying most vacant housing. Inclement weather and lack of year-round employment are factors in the high winter vacancy rate.

While high-density housing development in the Whittier Core Area may be the most cost-effective and practical means of providing housing in Whittier, it does not necessarily meet the desires of most residents. Potential homebuyers typically expect single-family units to be available for purchase within a community. Currently, the land most suitable for development is in Subdivision Phase II along Shotgun Cove Road. Most existing lots are privately owned and have not yet been developed. Once the road is completed, development in the Shotgun Cove area by private lot owners is expected to increase, although utilities are not currently available in the area.

Housing

In 1973, Whittier residents voted to buy the 97 acre military facility, which included all of Whittier's Core Area and Begich Towers, then called the Hodge Building.

Unlike most communities where single-family or low-density residential development is the most common form of housing, most of Whittier's residents live in one of two buildings: either the 14-story Begich Towers or the two-story Whittier Manor. Whittier residents can own or rent condominiums in either Begich Towers or Whittier Manor. Both facilities were originally built as military quarters more than a half-century ago. Table 1 ¹¹ and Table 2 ¹² show an inventory of housing in the community.

¹⁰ 2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates,
<https://factfinder.census.gov/faces/tableservices/jsf/pages/productview.xhtml?src=CF>

¹¹ City of Whittier

¹² U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census

Table 1: Number Housing Units in Whittier

Location	# of Units
Begich Towers	197
Whittier Manor	80
Anchor Annex	6
Whittier Subdivision Phase I	5
Whittier Subdivision Phase II	7
Total Number of Units:	295

Table 2: Housing Data

Housing Unit Types	# of Units
Total Number of Housing Units	280
Occupied Housing Units	114
Vacant Housing Units	166
Vacant Housing Due to Seasonal Use	104
Owner Occupied Housing Units	43
Renter Occupied Housing Units	71
Population Living in Households	220



Photo 2: Begich Towers

All units in Begich Towers and Whittier Manor have full living facilities. Not all units in Begich Towers are used for housing; the 1st, 14th, and 15th floors of Begich Towers are zoned commercially. Units are used by local businesses and service providers as facilities and office space.



Photo 3: Whittier Manor

In 2019, the Alaska State Legislature approved the transfer of the land on which Whittier Manor sits from the Alaska Railroad to Whittier Manor. Prior to 2019, the land was leased from the railroad. The Manor is now privately owned and operated by Whittier Manor and the Whittier Manor Condominium Association.

In addition to the multi-unit buildings in the Whittier Core Area, there are a few off-grid recreational cabins located along Shotgun Cove Road. But for one, these homes are constructed with contemporary wood frame construction, have no utilities, and are usually only occupied in the summer months.

Buckner Building

The Buckner building was designed to be the principle living quarters for the U.S. Army and is currently owned by the City of Whittier. The building is currently unoccupied, run-down, and vacant of all items of value as they have been stripped for salvage or destroyed by vandals. The building has not been maintained since the 1964 earthquake, and though not structurally



Photo 4: Buckner Building

damaged by the event, it has significantly deteriorated due to years of lack of use. Remediation and minimizing safety hazards and environmental issues in and around the Buckner Building is an ongoing priority for the City of Whittier.

Chapter 4: City Administration and Municipal Services

Chapter 4 covers City Administration, City Council, City Commissions, and certain municipal services including Public Safety and the Public Works Department.

City Administration

The City of Whittier was incorporated in 1969 as a fourth-class city. The 1972 revision of the State Municipal Code (Title 29) reclassified fourth-class cities as second-class cities. Because Whittier remains below the 400-resident threshold for first-class city status, it remains a second-class city.

The City of Whittier maintains a website at <http://www.whittieralaska.gov/> with information about the City's departments and administration, municipal code, Whittier harbor, visitor information, and ongoing projects.

Whittier has a City Manager form of government. The Manager is responsible for administering the City's day-to-day operations and carrying out the policy directions of the City Council, including the assurance to all taxpayers and residents that the local government is effective and responsive to their needs. The City's Assistant City Manager, Finance Director, Executive Assistant, and City Clerk each provide central staff support to the City Manager. The Director of Public Safety oversees the Police, Fire Department, and Emergency Management Services, while the Public Works Director and Harbormaster each operate their respective departments. The City also retains the services of an attorney to assist with legal concerns.

Whittier enacts many of the powers available to a second-class city. The City of Whittier imposes a seasonal 5% sales tax (April-September) and the City Real and Personal Tax rates generated \$8 million in 2018. Additionally, the City has a Passenger Transportation Business Tax, or PTBT. The PTBT is \$3 per passenger going out of the harbor and \$3 per passenger coming into the harbor. Whittier requires business licenses for all commercial establishments and charges various fees to users of the Small Boat Harbor to support operations. The City also exercises planning, platting, and zoning powers. Whittier adopted its most recent zoning ordinance in late 1984 and its most recent subdivision ordinance in 1999.

City Council

A seven-member City Council provides policy direction to the City of Whittier. Council members are elected annually in October in a general city election and serve staggered terms. The elected members select one Council member to serve as Mayor. The Council meets once per month on the evening of the third Tuesday. Additional special meetings and work sessions may be scheduled as needed.

Planning and Zoning Commission

The Planning and Zoning Commission has five members, all residents of Whittier. Its regulatory powers include making platting, variance, traffic, and conditional use decisions as well as advising the City Council on planning and zoning concerns, including the content of the zoning map (See Chapter 9) and the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission operates in accordance

with Title 17 of the Whittier Municipal Code. The Commission meets regularly on the first Wednesday of the month and holds special work sessions as needed.

Port and Harbor Commission

The Whittier Port and Harbor Commission is a seven-member panel that acts in an advisory capacity to the City Council regarding port and harbor matters, including the Small Boat Harbor and the City-controlled lands at the Head of Passage Canal. At least five members of the panel must be Whittier residents and up to two may be non-resident stakeholders. The Commission also advises the City Council on the following:

- Operation, management, regulation, and control of the City's port and harbor facilities
- Land use issues
- Contract review
- Economic and infrastructure development planning
- Setting or adjusting tariffs
- Budget, capital improvement program, and funding programs
- Appeals

City-Owned Facilities

On January 1, 2018, Whittier City employees moved into the new Public Safety Building located on Whittier Street across from the well-known Anchor Inn and the Prince William Sound Museum. The Public Safety Building is 33,000-square-feet in size and cost approximately \$8 million to build. It is a three-story building housing the police station, the volunteer fire department, volunteer emergency medical services (EMS), a public health clinic, City staff offices, and the City Council chambers. The City's Planning and Zoning Commission now also meets in the City Council chambers, located on the 3rd floor of the building.

Municipal Services

Public Safety

Public safety in Whittier is provided by the Whittier Police Department, Whittier Volunteer Fire Department, and the Whittier Volunteer Emergency Medical Service (EMS). One full-time, paid firefighter/Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) offers leadership, training, and oversight for the volunteers. Each department is housed in the new Whittier Public Safety Building. Additionally, the United States Coast Guard and Alaska State Troopers provide public safety services in the area.

Staffing of the Whittier Police Department varies with budget considerations and seasonal fluctuations. Current staffing of the Whittier Police department includes six patrol officers and a Director of Public Safety. A full-time seasonal officer is employed from May through September, largely to assist with the increase in tunnel and cruise ship traffic. In spring 2018, Whittier contracted with Cordova to dispatch all 911 calls, enabling Whittier public safety to both respond faster and more efficiently to emergency calls.

In 2017, the City of Whittier contracted with the Municipality of Anchorage to include the Girdwood Valley Service Area in its scheduled patrol coverage. As a result of this contract, the City of Whittier increased patrol officers from two officers in 2012 to six officers in 2019. An updated contract was approved in November 2019 by both the Municipality of Anchorage and the City of Whittier. The new contract is for three years, with further options to extend.

The Fire Department operates on a voluntary basis and maintains a fleet of two fire engines and an extraction truck with search and rescue equipment. The Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has one full-time EMT and one full-time seasonal EMT employed from May through September to largely help with the increase in visitor traffic from cruise ships. EMS is equipped with two ambulances.

Public Works

The City Public Works department provides road maintenance, snow removal, water, and sewer. The department is headed by a director and is assisted by three full-time staff positions and a seasonal employee.

There are approximately eight and a half miles of roads in Whittier, including approximately four miles of paved roads and four and a half miles of unpaved roads. With an annual average snowfall of approximately 21 feet, snow removal is a major expense. The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities maintains the road from the tunnel to the ferry terminal. The City is responsible for maintaining all other roads.



Photo 5: Aerial View of the Harbor District and Rail Yard

Chapter 5: Education, Recreation, and Non-Municipal Facilities

Chapter 5 provides an overview of Whittier’s school, parks, recreational opportunities, and non-municipal facilities including the non-denominational churches and the Prince William Sound Museum.

Education

The Whittier Community School is operated by the Chugach School District (CSD). It is a Regional Educational Attendance Area (REAA) that is part of a district that encompasses Prince William Sound. The preschool serves children as young as age three but is not funded through the traditional state funding formula and is not guaranteed funding year-to-year.

During the 2018-2019 school year, the school enrolled 36 K-12 students and 12 preschool students for a total of 48 students. For the 2019-2020 school year, the school enrollment is 51 students in K-12 and ten preschool students. This is the largest Whittier Community School enrollment of the past 20 years. An additional teacher was added to the 2019-2020 school staff to facilitate the larger enrollment. This brings the total staff to five certificated teachers, one full-time, non-certified preschool teacher, two teaching aides, a secretary, a custodian, a maintenance person, and a breakfast cook.



Photo 6: Begich Towers and Whittier School

The Whittier Community School is located south of Begich Towers and houses educational facilities from preschool through grade 12. The school building has been remodeled several times since its construction. In 1981, four classrooms, a library, darkroom, kitchenette, small office, storage area, and multipurpose room were built. In 1985, a regulation-size gymnasium was added to the east side of the building. In 1986, the multipurpose room was expanded to include the library, offices, and a lunchroom as they exist today. In 2009, the school received a new roof and improved handicap access. In 2011, the school got boiler and ventilation upgrades for heating, a new fire suppression system, and new carpeting and paint. In 2013, a covered, outdoor playground was added.

Educational Awards

The Chugach School District (CSD) utilizes Performance-Based Education and is one of only a few districts that has fully incorporated this model. In April 2009, the school district was selected as a winner of the 2009 APEX Excellence Award. The award represents the highest level of recognition that an Alaska organization can receive for performance excellence and was described as “truly a role model organization.”

In 2001, the Chugach School District was also honored with the Malcom Baldrige National Quality Award and set an example across the nation of grass roots reform in education.¹³ That same year, the Whittier Community School was awarded the New American High Schools Award. Awards are given to schools whose whole-school reform efforts enable their students to excel.

The Whittier Community School was also recognized in the Scholastics Parent and Child Magazine as one of the 25 Coolest Schools in America.¹⁴

Recreation

Whittier’s proximity to Passage Canal provides easy access to Prince William Sound and offers many distinct opportunities for marine recreation. Seasonal visitors and residents alike enjoy boating, sightseeing, sport fishing, kayaking, sailing, and recreational shrimping activities on the Sound. The area is also a popular site for scuba divers who frequent the clear, deep waters of Passage Canal. The long



Photo 7: Lu Young Park in Whittier

¹³ Baldrige Award Recipient Profile, <https://www.nist.gov/baldrige/chugach-school-district>

¹⁴ Scholastic Parent and Child Magazine, <http://www.scholastic.com/coolschools/>

waiting list for boat slips in the Small Boat Harbor is indicative of Whittier’s high demand as a gateway to Prince William Sound.

Whittier’s winters, typical of those in coastal Prince William Sound, are characterized by frequent storms bringing strong winds, deep snows, and large amounts of rain. While the stormy weather and freeze/thaw cycle limits many outdoor recreational pursuits, scuba diving, hunting, snow machining, and cross-country skiing remain popular throughout the winter months. Winter recreation in Whittier, particularly snow machining and cross-country skiing, has become more popular in recent years.

Non-Municipal Facilities

Prince William Sound Museum

The Prince William Sound Museum is currently located in the Anchor Inn and is one of the top attractions in Whittier. The museum was formed in 2003 and has 32 exhibits in 1,200 square-feet of space. The museum features exhibits showcasing the history of Whittier, the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, Alaska pioneering, the Alaska Railroad, the Alaska Steamship Company, and Alaska military history from 1790 – 1991. The museum is currently seeking support for a new space and has created a plan for a joint Prince William Sound Museum and Whittier Community Center.



Photo 8: Prince William Sound Museum located at the Anchor Inn

Non-denominational Christian Churches

Whittier Community Christian Church and Malamalama Fou (translates as New Light Church) both serve the community’s spiritual needs and were listed as one of the community’s top assets in the 2019 Whittier Community Visioning Meeting. The churches share a dedicated space in the basement level of Begich Towers although they hold services at different times. Whittier Community Christian Church offers services in English while Malamalama Fou offers services in Samoan.

Health

The Eastern Aleutian Tribes operates the Whittier Community Health Center located in the Public Safety Building. The clinic is open Monday through Friday and has a sliding fee scale based on household size and income.

Chapter 6: City Revenues and Expenses

Chapter 6 details City revenues and expenses for the 2018 tax year, which are the most recent audited financial statements available at the time of writing this document. Most City revenues and expenses are captured in one of two fund types: Governmental Funds or Enterprise Funds. Governmental Funds include the General Fund, Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund, Shotgun Cove Road Capital Project Fund, and Nonmajor Funds. Enterprise Funds include the Small Boat Harbor, Water and Sewer, and Parking.¹⁵

Governmental Funds 2018

Revenues

Governmental Funds consist of the General City Fund, Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund, Shotgun Cove Road Capital Project Fund, and Nonmajor Funds. As detailed in Table 3, covering the revenues and expenditures of the Governmental Funds, the City of Whittier recorded a total of \$6.4 million in revenues for Governmental Funds. Of this total, \$1.6 million of local tax revenue was collected from real and personal property taxes, business transportation taxes, and sales tax. Charges for City-based services relating to general government activities and public safety comprised an additional \$816,825 in revenue. An additional \$107,298 in other revenues was collected through various sources. These taxes, charges for services, and other revenues are all part of the General Fund.

A total of all funds within the Governmental Funds are provided in the far-right column of Table 3. The City collected \$674,320 from the Commercial Passenger Vessel Tax Program for the Special Revenue Fund. Additional revenues come from other State and Federal sources.

Expenditures

Expenditures outlined in Table 3 show a total of \$3.1 million spent from the capital outlay, including \$2.8 million for the Shotgun Cove Capital Project Fund and \$ 0.3 million from Nonmajor Funds. Additionally, \$1.3 million was expended to fund Public Safety, \$904,671 on General Government, and \$545,265 on the Public Works. Governmental Fund expenditures in 2018 totaled \$6.0 million.

¹⁵ Parking was removed from the Enterprise Funds category in 2016 and is now tracked in the Harbor Enterprise Fund

Governmental Funds - Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Fund Balances (2018)

	General Fund	Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund	Shotgun Cove Capital Project Fund	Nonmajor Funds	Total Governmental Funds
Revenues					
Local Sources					
Taxes	\$1,586,894	-	-	-	\$1,586,894
Charges for service	\$816,825	-	-	-	\$816,825
Other	\$107,298	-	-	-	\$107,298
Intergovernmental					
Federal Sources	\$77,422		\$718,519	\$29,500	\$825,441
State Sources	\$189,538	\$674,320	\$2,054,697	\$143,545	\$3,062,100
Total Revenues	\$2,777,977	\$674,320	\$2,773,216	\$173,045	\$6,398,558
Expenditures					
Current					
General government	\$904,671	-	-	-	\$904,671
Public safety	\$1,341,279	-	-	-	\$1,341,279
Facilities and escrows	\$9,748	-	-	-	\$9,748
Public works	\$545,265	-	-	-	\$545,265
Parks and recreation	\$68,144	-	-	-	\$68,144
Community services	-	\$15,000	-	-	\$15,000
Capital outlay	-	-	\$2,798,023	\$269,723	\$3,067,746
Total expenditures	\$2,869,107	\$15,000	\$2,798,023	\$269,723	\$5,951,853
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over (under) expenditures	(\$91,130)	\$659,320	(\$24,807)	(\$96,678)	\$446,705
Other Financing Sources (uses)					
Transfers in	\$287,363	-	\$24,807	\$1,829,785	\$2,141,955
Transfers out	(\$1,854,592)	(\$287,363)	-	-	(\$2,141,955)
Net other financing sources (uses)	(\$1,567,229)	(\$287,363)	\$24,807	\$1,829,785	-
Net change in fund balances	(\$1,658,359)	\$371,957	-	\$1,733,107	\$446,705
Beginning fund balances (Jan. 1, 2018)	\$3,260,360	\$446,480	-	(\$1,677,450)	\$2,029,390
Ending fund balances (deficits) (Dec. 31, 2018)	\$1,602,001	\$818,437	-	\$55,657	\$2,476,095

Table 3: Governmental Funds: Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances (2018) ¹⁶¹⁶ City of Whittier Audited Financial Statements (2018)

Exhibit 5: Governmental Funds: Revenues, Expenditures, and Funds Balances (2011-2018) ¹⁷

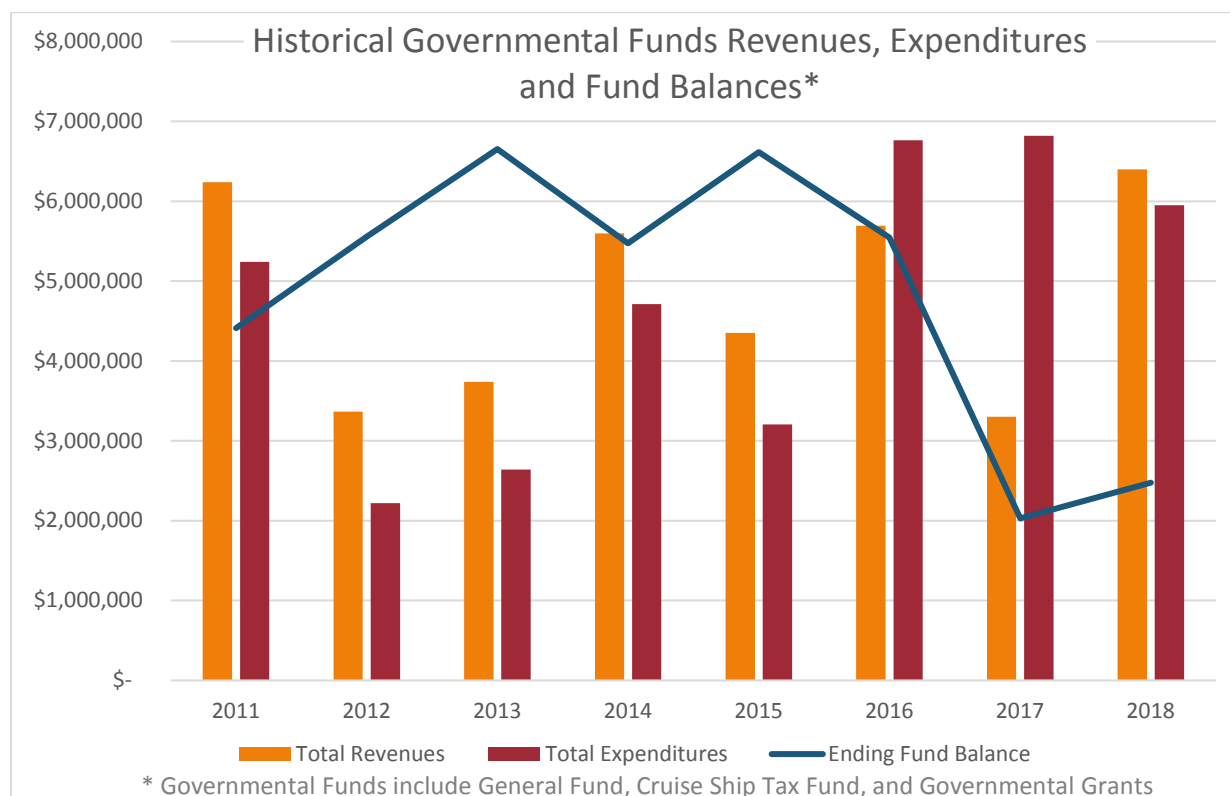


Exhibit 5 shows historical data detailing the changes in Governmental Funds revenues, expenditures, and end-of-year fund balances for the years 2011-2018. Year 2018 is the same data illustrated in Table 3. Revenues were highest in 2018 due to \$2.7 million in grant funding for the Shotgun Cove Capital Project and lowest in 2012. Expenditures were highest in 2016 and 2017. The Public Safety Building project expenditures of \$4.2 million, combined with lower-than-average grant revenue in 2017, offers explanation as to the significant dip in the 2017 end-of-year fund balance.

Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund

The Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund is one fund within the compilation of funds that make up the Governmental Funds as previously described. Revenue for the cruise ship fund comes from the State of Alaska Commercial Passenger Vessel Excise Tax Program per AS 43.52.200. The City receives \$5.00 per cruise ship passenger meeting the eligibility requirements of the statute. More information on cruise ships in Whittier can be found in Chapter 8 under Marine Transportation.

¹⁷ City of Whittier Audited Financial Statements (2011-2018)

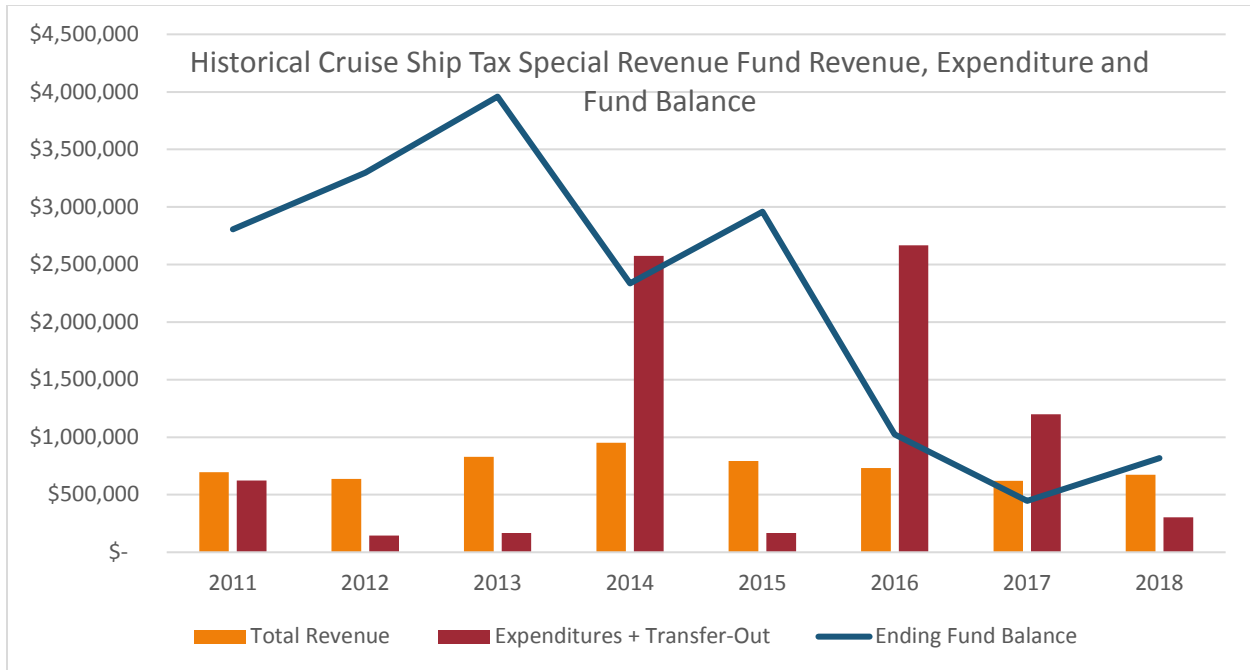


Exhibit 6: Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund (2011-2018) ¹⁸

Exhibit 6 above shows revenues, expenditures, and overall changes in the Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund balance from 2011 through 2018. The Ending Fund Balance peaks at a high in 2013, and then declines through 2017 with a slight rise in 2018, though annual revenues remain consistent. The City has used Commercial Passenger Vessel Tax funding for harbor infrastructure, public safety services, passenger services, railroad station improvements, and the Public Safety Building.

Enterprise Funds 2011-2018

From 2011 through 2015, the City of Whittier Enterprise Funds consisted of the Small Boat Harbor, Water and Sewer, and Parking. An enterprise fund is a self-supporting fund that captures revenues from City-provided goods and services, such as mortgage fees for the Small Boat Harbor. Since 2016, Parking has been included in the Small Boat Harbor Enterprise Fund. Revenues, expenses, and end-of-year fund balances from 2011 to 2018 can be found in Table 4.

¹⁸ City of Whittier Audited Financial Statements (2011-2018)

Enterprise Fund Revenues, Expenses, and Ending Net Position (2011-2018)

	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Operating Revenues								
Small Boat Harbor	\$1,220,670	\$1,127,452	\$1,129,222	\$1,147,664	\$1,235,869	\$1,421,008	\$1,657,508	\$1,712,961
Water and Sewer	\$430,047	\$445,147	\$508,089	\$476,831	\$472,490	\$234,942	\$339,671	\$361,957
Parking - Nonmajor Fund	\$108,275	\$107,783	\$115,751	\$121,351	\$133,862	*	*	*
Total Operating Revenues	\$1,758,992	\$1,680,382	\$1,753,062	\$1,745,846	\$1,842,221	\$1,655,950	\$1,997,179	\$2,074,918
Operating Expenses								
Small Boat Harbor	\$1,619,365	\$1,860,052	\$1,921,050	\$2,032,698	\$1,854,788	\$2,026,898	\$2,345,264	\$2,322,336
Water and Sewer	\$712,781	\$722,435	\$733,604	\$730,076	\$636,658	\$665,863	\$555,402	\$578,894
Parking - Nonmajor Fund	\$76,435	\$82,362	\$85,247	\$91,876	\$63,843	*	*	*
Total Operating Expenses	\$2,408,581	\$2,664,849	\$2,739,901	\$2,854,650	\$2,555,289	\$2,692,761	\$2,900,666	\$2,901,230
Income (loss) from Operation	(\$649,589)	(\$984,467)	(\$986,839)	(\$1,108,804)	(\$713,068)	(\$1,036,811)	(\$903,487)	(\$826,312)
Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)								
Small Boat Harbor	\$65,494	\$66,040	\$71,865	\$86,204	\$1,824,146	\$27,639	\$533,143	\$34,276
Water and Sewer	\$18,796	\$24,363	\$27,951	\$43,230	\$283	\$19,966	\$58,093	\$24,882
Parking - Nonmajor Fund	\$1,016	\$1,725	\$2,693	\$3,661	\$0	*	*	*
Total Nonoperating Revenues (Expenses)	\$85,306	\$92,128	\$102,509	\$133,095	\$1,824,429	\$47,605	\$591,236	\$59,158
Change in Net Position	\$4,084,255	\$212,150	(\$884,419)	\$1,622,711	\$1,111,361	(\$989,206)	(\$312,251)	(\$767,154)
Beginning Net Position	\$20,645,256	\$24,729,511	\$24,941,661	\$24,057,242	\$25,679,953	\$26,791,314	\$25,802,108	\$25,489,857
Ending Net Position	\$24,729,511	\$24,941,661	\$24,057,242	\$25,679,953	\$26,791,314	\$25,802,108	\$25,489,857	\$24,722,703

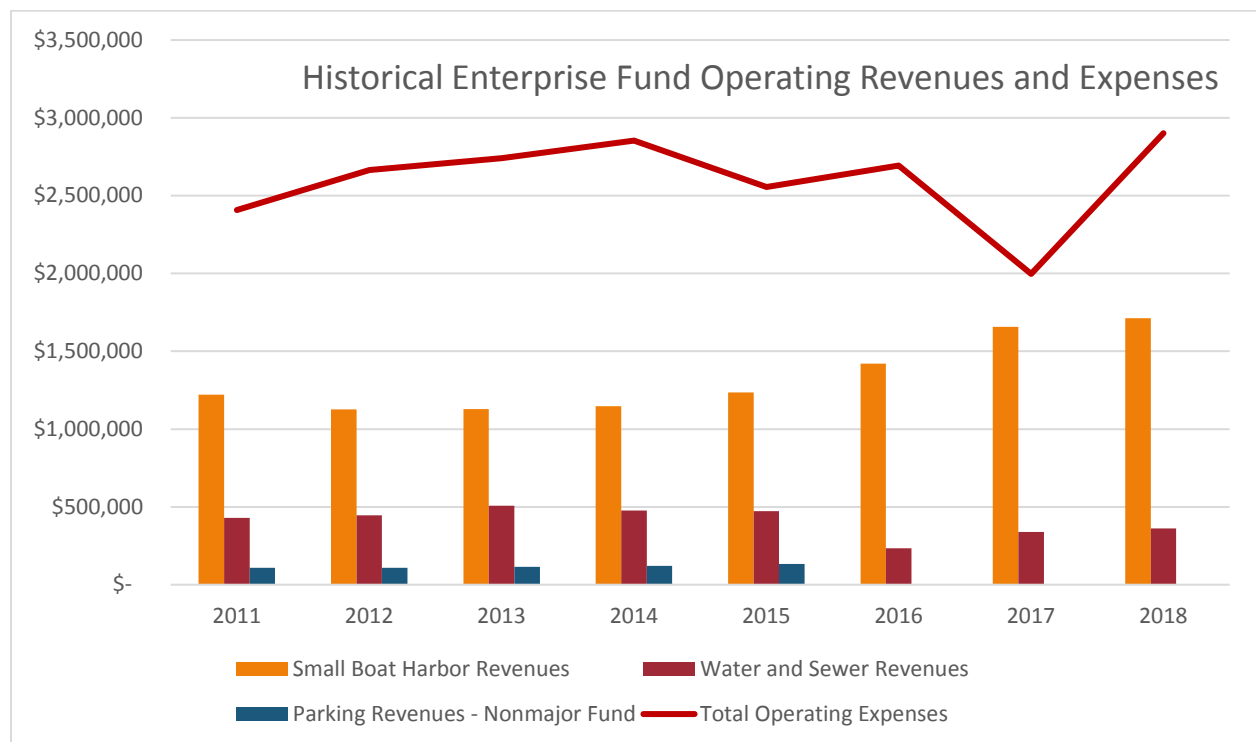
Table 4: Enterprise Fund: Revenues, Expenses, and Ending Fund Balance (2011-2018) ¹⁹

* Parking Revenues and Expenses are included in Small Boat Harbor figures, effective 2016.

¹⁹ City of Whittier Audited Financial Statements (2011-2018)

Enterprise Fund operating revenues are shown in Exhibit 7, along with the trend line for operating expenses. Beginning in 2015, the Small Boat Harbor shows a growth in revenue that continues through 2018. The increase in Small Boat Harbor revenues is in part due to the inclusion of parking fees starting in 2016. Water and Sewer revenues remain consistent until a 2016 decline resulting from the loss of a major fish processing customer, then slightly rebounding the following years. Operating expenses have risen consistently in most years, consistently exceeding total operating revenue.

Exhibit 7: Enterprise Fund Operating Revenues and Expenses (2011-2018) ²⁰



²⁰ City of Whittier Audited Financial Statements (2011-2018)

Chapter 7: Utility Services

Chapter 7 outlines utility services in Whittier, including both publicly and privately provided services.

City-Provided Public Utilities

Water

City-provided water and sewer utilities service the Whittier Delta, which includes the Whittier Core Area, the Small Boat Harbor, the Alaska Railroad yard, and the port area ending at DeLong Dock. Cove Creek Road and Shotgun Cove Road (including the dwellings along Shotgun Cove Road) do not currently have access to City-provided water and sewer services. The City has made provisions for utilities along Shotgun Cove Road, but as of 2019 it is not cost-feasible to move forward with further utility development for this area.

Three wells located between Whittier Street and Fifth Street supply the City's public water utility. The wells are between 70 and 80 feet deep and range in capacity from 220 to 530 gallons of water flow per minute.

When large cruise ships are refilling their water tanks, available water supply is reduced in the west area of the Small Boat Harbor. This presents a potential hazard for localized fire suppression in the area. Currently, the City and the Harbor are examining potential alterations to the existing harbor piping system to improve water flow capacity, increase water pressure, and create an option to reroute water during an emergency.

Sewer

The sewer system in Whittier consists of a wastewater collection system and a primary treatment facility. The primary treatment of wastewater is performed in six 50,000-gallon concrete septic tanks located near Depot Road. Treated effluent is discharged into Passage Canal. The system is sized to meet the needs of approximately 1,150 permanent residents.

The City is constantly evaluating supply versus demand on public utilities. Seasonal tourism increases temporary, but high-level, demands on the system. If Whittier's base population continues to grow, combined with seasonal high use, then regular use levels could strain the current utility system and require future infrastructure developments and system improvements.

Public and Private Utility Services

Electric Power Supply

Chugach Electric Association Inc. supplies electric power to the City of Whittier. Serving Anchorage and communities along the Turnagain Arm, Chugach Electric is the largest electric cooperative in Alaska. Power is supplied to Whittier via a single 25 kilovolt, three-phase power line extending from the Portage substation approximately 11 miles from the Whittier Core Area. The system serving Whittier can accommodate peak electric demand of approximately 10,000 kilowatts (kW). Currently, the typical peak electric demand of Whittier is between 1,000 and 1,500 kW.

The electric power line that runs between the Portage substation and the utility tunnel was recently buried underground, increasing the reliability of power to Whittier. An underground circuit extends from the tunnel into the City. Whittier is fortunate in that it is connected to two power mains rather than just one. The City receives power from both the Anchorage transmission main and the Kenai transmission main. If one of these mains is offline, some Whittier infrastructure may need to receive power from their own emergency generator.

Shoreside Fuel has a 200,000-gallon, bulk-fuel storage facility, which can support the City of Whittier's emergency backup generators. These portable units supply a total of 850 kW of reserve power that support City infrastructure to include the Harbor, the Public Safety Building, and the water/wastewater system. Some private Whittier building complexes have their own backup units. A few buildings within Whittier are not covered by emergency power.

As of 2019, electricity rates in Whittier are \$0.16 a kWh, which is the lowest cost of electricity in the Prince William Sound Region.²¹

Telecommunications

Whittier residents are served by the following companies: United Utilities, Inc. (UUI) provides cable, telephone, and internet service; Alaska Communications (ACS) and General Communication Inc. (GCI) provide Internet service; and Dish Network provides cable service.

Solid Waste Services

Since 2006, the City of Whittier has contracted with Alaska Waste to haul the City's refuse from Whittier to the Anchorage landfill. City trash is deposited in dumpsters located at the harbor office, harbor east ramp, harbor station, and Public Safety Building. During the winter season, dumpsters are emptied once every two weeks. Each year beginning on May 1, a summer schedule with more frequent pick-ups accommodates a higher seasonal use rate. Dumpsters are emptied twice per week in the harbor and once per week elsewhere in town. Private owners are responsible for contracting their own waste pickup. Although additional dumpsters are located in other areas of the community, they are not part of the City's contract with Alaska Waste.

Whittier's location, regional geology, and limited land-base make it difficult to envision how the community might one day develop a landfill that would meet state and federal requirements. As a result, the City plans to continue transporting solid waste to Anchorage for the foreseeable future.

Natural Gas

Enstar Natural Gas Company provides natural gas to Whittier. Rates for natural gas in Whittier are like Anchorage rates, which compare favorably to the rest of the country.

²¹ Prince William Sound Economic Development District Sound Opportunities, Figure 11.D.1

Chapter 8: Transportation

Chapter 8 includes an overview of the transportation services in Whittier including the railroad, freight, Whittier's roads, and marine transportation.

Land Transportation

Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel

The Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel is a two-and-a-half-mile combined rail and highway use tunnel. At a length of 13,300 feet, it is the longest tunnel in North America. The tunnel connects Whittier to Portage Valley and the Seward Highway. Originally constructed solely as a railway tunnel, it opened to one-way motor vehicle traffic in June of 2000. The tunnel switches traffic direction every half-hour and is controlled by a computerized traffic-control system that regulates both rail and highway traffic. A total of 400 cars can travel through the tunnel during each opening, for a total of 800 cars per hour.

Table 5 shows the number of vehicles that passed through the Anton Anderson Tunnel by month from 2012 to 2019. As shown, tunnel traffic has steadily increased in year over year. In 2019 traffic increased by nearly 8% over 2018 and set records for vehicle counts for eight of the 12 months.

Month	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
January	4,378	5,120	6,148	6,362	5,308	4,700	5,424	6,336
February	5,370	4,820	5,180	5,816	5,742	4,868	5,472	6,694
March	6,246	7,828	8,254	9,502	9,192	7,614	8,472	11,394
April	10,722	12,068	11,636	12,242	13,602	14,484	12,836	14,898
May	23,862	28,724	28,756	30,960	32,308	28,940	28,380	29,420
June	40,370	43,736	39,494	39,276	41,254	42,086	44,574	47,324
July	43,114	49,856	46,626	49,178	51,016	53,888	53,126	56,174
August	37,324	42,840	40,394	43,054	40,098	41,228	43,584	52,860
September	19,984	21,248	20,562	23,522	23,556	24,098	27,978	27,492
October	9,790	8,376	8,798	9,438	9,382	11,078	10,294	12,070
November	7,186	5,024	5,810	5,778	5,936	5,832	6,424	7,504
December	5,754	4,734	5,036	5,772	5,428	5,498	5,608	N/A*
CY Total	214,100	234,374	226,694	240,900	242,822	244,314	252,178	272,218
Average Percentage Change	-6.55%	9.47%	-3.28%	6.27%	1.04%	0.61%	3.22%	7.91%

Table 5: Monthly Vehicle Count (2012-2019) ²²

*December 2019 data not available at time of writing

²² <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/whittiertunnel/trafficdata.shtml#>

As shown in Exhibit 8, April to September comprises the peak season for tunnel use to access Whittier. In January and February, an average of 5,500 vehicles pass through the tunnel each month, while in the peak season of July an average of 50,000 vehicles pass through the tunnel.

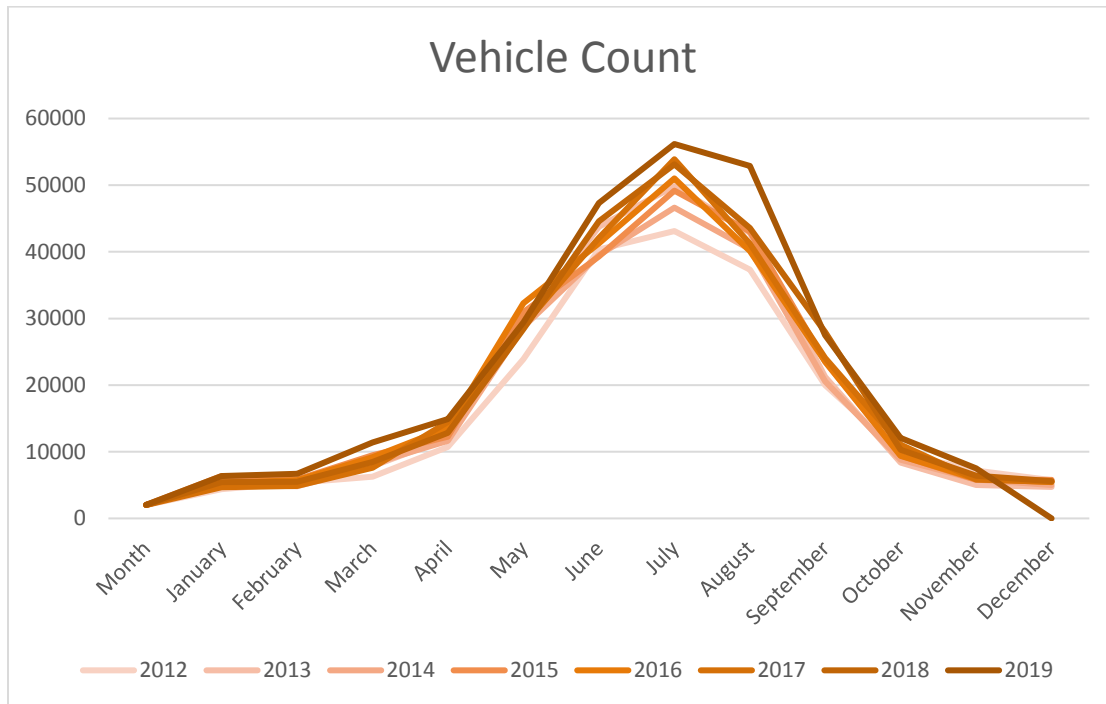


Exhibit 8: Monthly Vehicle Count (2012-2019) ²³

The tunnel cannot accommodate vehicular and train traffic simultaneously and must close to vehicular traffic when it is needed for passenger or freight train access. The number of trains passing through the tunnel per day varies seasonally. Variable train schedules can cause delays to the standard vehicle access schedule. When cruise ships dock in Whittier, additional trains are required to serve passengers, which further affects tunnel opening schedules and creates additional tunnel closures to vehicular traffic.

Road System in Whittier

Figure 3 shows Whittier’s road system and classifications.

West Camp Road provides access from the ferry terminal to Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, which later connects to the Seward Highway. Due to its significance as an access point between the Alaska Marine Highway and the Seward Highway, West Camp Road is included on the National Highway System and is maintained by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF). The ADOT&PF keeps an Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) count for highways in Alaska. In 2018, West Camp Road experienced an Annual Average Daily Traffic count of 838 vehicles between the tunnel and Whittier Street.

²³ <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/creg/whittiertunnel/trafficdata.shtml#>

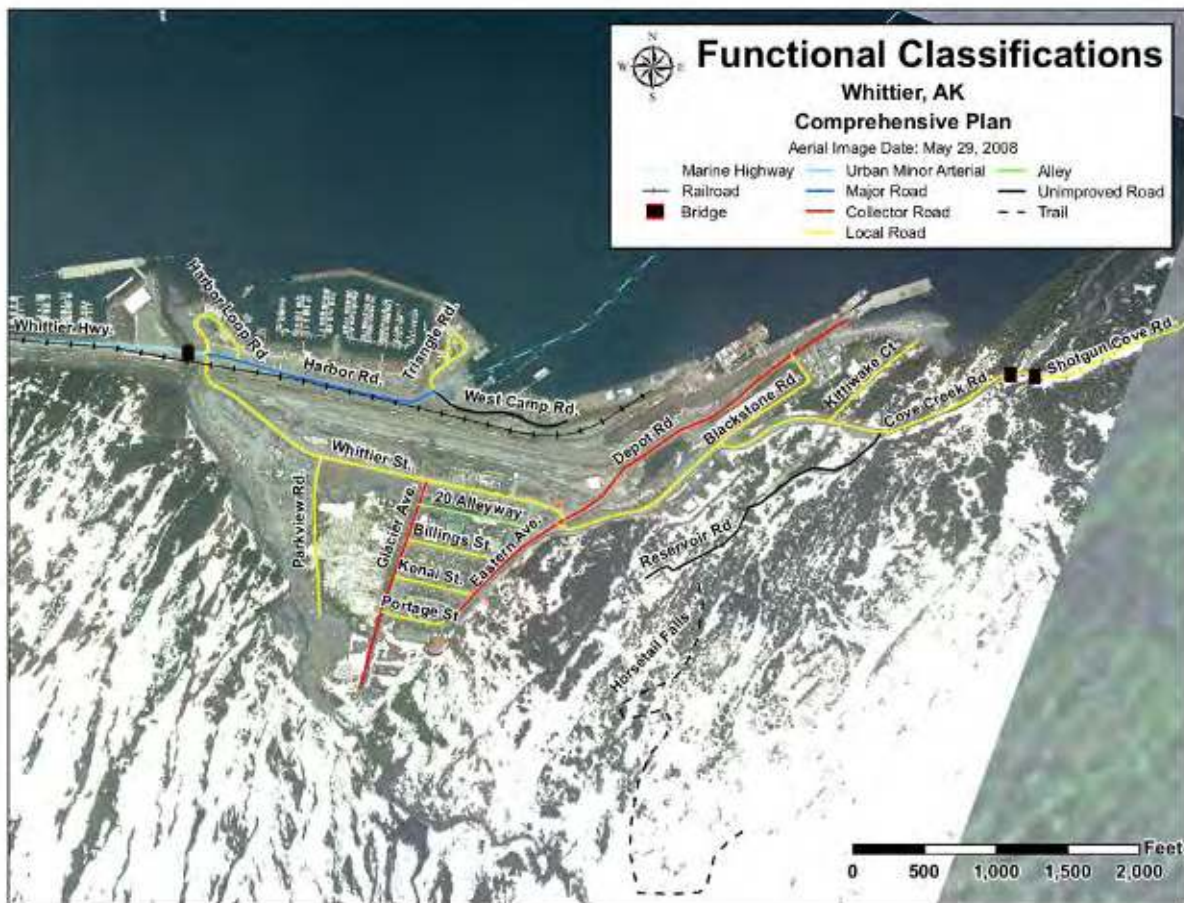


Figure 3: Road Map of Whittier²⁴

Whittier Street runs between West Camp Road and Eastern Avenue and provides access to the Whittier Core Area south of the railroad. Improvements to the at-grade railroad crossing were made in the summer of 2019.

As shown in Figure 3, the remaining streets in Whittier fall within the classification of Collector, Local, Alley, or Unimproved and are a mix of both paved and unpaved. The condition of roads in Whittier ranges from well-maintained with sidewalks and curb to extreme disrepair and lacking pedestrian facilities.

Pedestrian and Bicycle System

The U.S. Military installed sidewalks with rolled curbs in the Whittier Core Area. Sidewalks were added throughout the Harbor and Triangle areas in 2004. The Triangle area is located east of the Small Boat Harbor and just north of the ferry dock and is a commercial area. There are no sidewalks in other areas of Whittier, confining pedestrian traffic to the streets. During summer months, a temporary fence prohibits pedestrians from walking across the railroad tracks in compliance with Homeland Security regulations. There is a pedestrian pathway under the railroad yard that provides a vital connection from the harbor area to the Whittier Core Area

²⁴ Map pulled from the City of Whittier 2012 Comprehensive Plan, not necessarily produced in 2012

and main residential area. Constructed in 2002, the pedestrian tunnel has significantly improved pedestrian safety in the rail yard area.

The Whittier Subdivision Ordinance encourages sidewalks to be constructed within rights-of-way. However, it lacks specificity regarding road placement and accompanying improvements such as utility boxes, street trees, and driveway aprons.

The ADOT&PF installed a separated bike/walkway between West Camp Road and Passage Canal that connects to a sidewalk in the harbor, continuing to the Triangle area.

Dedicated rights-of-way for cyclists are also limited. Apart from the separated pathway and wide shoulders leading into Whittier from the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, bicycle paths are minimal. The preservation of pathway corridors and wide shoulders for cyclists on all major and collector routes is viewed as an important consideration for future road planning.

Shotgun Cove Road



Figure 4: Proposed Shotgun Cove Road Extension ²⁵

On January 8, 2019, the City proposed Phase V of the Shotgun Cove Road project (see Figure 4). The proposed road would extend Shotgun Cove Road approximately two and a half miles from the existing terminus point at Second Salmon Run (Mile 2) to the proposed terminus at Trinity Point (Mile 4.5). The proposed road would be a two-lane gravel construction with a total project cost estimated at \$24.3 million. The City completed the draft Design Study Report for this section of road in 2018 and is currently seeking funding for Phase V of the project, which would complete this extension.²⁶

²⁵ City of Whittier

²⁶ City of Whittier Shotgun Cove Road Extension Mile 2.0 to 4.5 Draft Design Study Report

Trails

There are three major trails in Whittier: Portage Pass Trail, Horsetail Falls Trail, and Emerald Cove Trail. Whittier Creek Trail is a shorter, picturesque trail that follows the banks of Whittier Creek from an entry point at Whittier Street (through the Whittier Parking and Camping lot) and ends by some waterfalls south of the Begich Towers building. Within a community poll conducted during the May 2019 Whittier Community Visioning Meeting, trails/hiking in Whittier was listed as Whittier's top over-looked asset.

The Portage Pass Trail was historically used by native Alaskans, Russian fur traders, and other earlier settlers. The trailhead was once an old mining road and is located on the southside of West Camp Road, across from the old tank farm. The trail can be dusty during the summer months and due to elevation gains, snow can persist into late spring or early summer. The trail offers views of Passage Canal, the surrounding mountains, and glaciers. The trail is within Chugach National Forest boundaries and is maintained by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). In 2019, the Conservation Fund purchased the private land at Portage Pass trailhead and is currently in the process of turning the land over to the USFS. Due to private land ownership of the trail start area until 2019, the USFS does not currently have a formal trailhead. The USFS is currently seeking funding to complete a master plan that will likely include plans for development of a formal trailhead at Portage Pass Trail.

Horsetail Falls Trail is located off the first fork of Cove Creek Road. The trailhead is near the City's water reservoir and has limited parking available. There is local concern about the proximity of the trailhead to the City's water supply, and as such, advertisement of the trailhead is limited. The trail extends one mile through alpine terrain to the southeast of



Photo 9: View Across Passage Canal from Lou Young Park

Whittier. Boardwalks in wet areas help minimize the impact of foot traffic. A lookout platform provides a view of the harbor and nearby mountains. The trail is situated on City property.

Emerald Cove Trail lies beyond Second Salmon Run near what is currently the terminus point for Shotgun Cove Road. The trail is situated on relatively easy terrain with minimal elevation gains. It stays near the coastline of Passage Canal and offers excellent views of the canal, mountains, glaciers, rivers, and waterfalls. The three-mile trail ends in Emerald Cove.

Railroad

In 1941, Anton Anderson, an Army engineer for whom the tunnel is named, headed the construction team building a rail spur from Portage to Whittier. In 1942, the rail line into Whittier was completed, becoming a major supply link for the U.S. Military in Whittier throughout World War II.

Today, the Anton Anderson Tunnel is owned by the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) and is operated by the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The ARRC operates summer passenger service throughout its system with peak service from mid-May to mid-September. During peak summer season, the Glacier Discover passenger train travels to Whittier twice a day.

The ARRC also provides seasonal charter train service as an add-on package option for cruise ship passengers. These charter trains transport tourists and visitors from Whittier to Anchorage, the Denali National Park area, and other destinations in Interior Alaska. A temporary platform and rail spur were installed near the cruise ship dock to allow cruise ship passengers access to rail transportation. In 2004, the ARRC reported that because passengers are required to cross the Whittier Highway to access this spur, ARRC would like a more permanent and safer solution developed.

The ARRC continues to own most of the land in the Whittier Core Area and continues to utilize Whittier as an important port of access to the Lower 48 and Canadian National rail systems. There is no direct rail connection between Alaska and the Lower 48. Whittier plays a vital role in connecting Alaska to the Lower 48 via the Alaska Marine Highway System and rail barge cargo.

Table 6 shows the number of passengers and the amount of freight that traveled through the Port of Whittier via rail between 2011 and 2017.

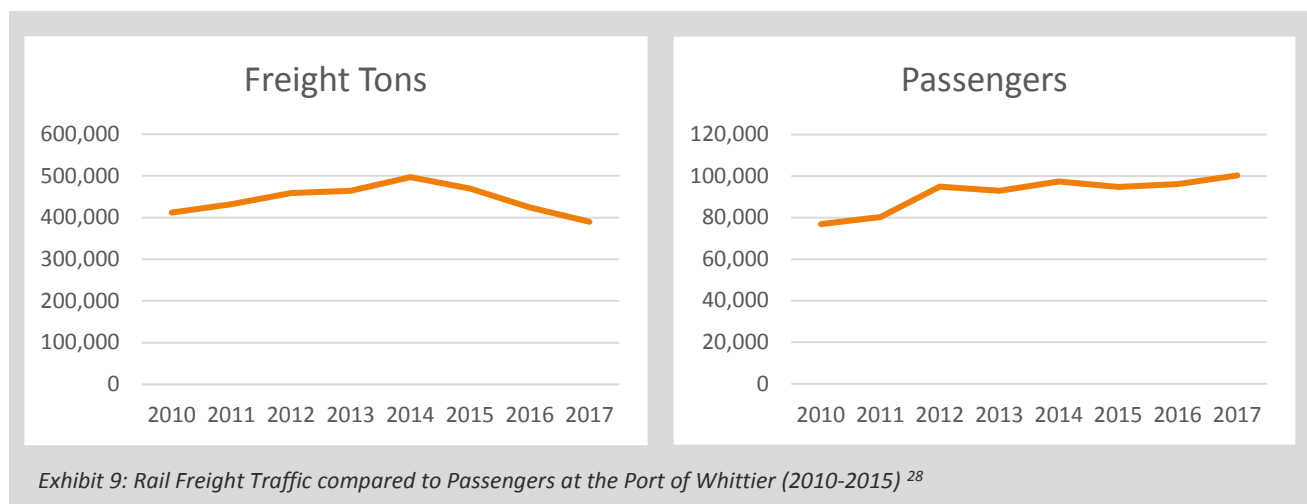
Distribution of Freight Tons and Passengers through the Port of Whittier

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017
Freight Tons	412,000	432,000	459,000	464,000	497,000	470,000	424,000	390,000
Passengers	76,910	80,263	94,942	92,993	97,336	94,751	96,239	100,337

Table 6: Freight and Railroad Passenger Traffic at the Port of Whittier (2010-2017) ²⁷

²⁷ Sound Opportunities: Economic Growth for the Prince William Sound Region

As evidenced in Exhibit 9 below and in Table 6 above, there was a decline in freight traffic through Whittier from 2014 to 2017, while there was a steady increase in rail passengers travelling from 2010 through 2017.



Freight

Whittier, a year-round, ice-free, deep-water port, acts as a freight exchange hub for barge service between Alaska, the Lower 48, and Canada. Freight accounts for the majority of ARRC's business. Approximately 25% of ARRC's freight cargo destined to Southcentral Alaska is transported through Whittier. Additionally, approximately 90% of all hazardous cargo destined for Southcentral Alaska travels through the Port of Whittier.

Rail barge service to Whittier began in 1964 and continues today with two companies providing regularly scheduled service to Alaska: Alaska Marine Lines (a subsidiary of Lynden Incorporated) and Canadian National Railway Company. The rail yard is used to store south-bound freight cars prior to barge arrival and off-loading. When north-bound barges arrive, freight cars are unloaded onto tracks in the ARRC rail yard, after which the cars stored in the rail yard can be loaded onto the barge for transportation. Additional rail yard land serves as a staging area where flat cars are unloaded and containers are stacked prior to being loaded onto barges for transportation out of Alaska.

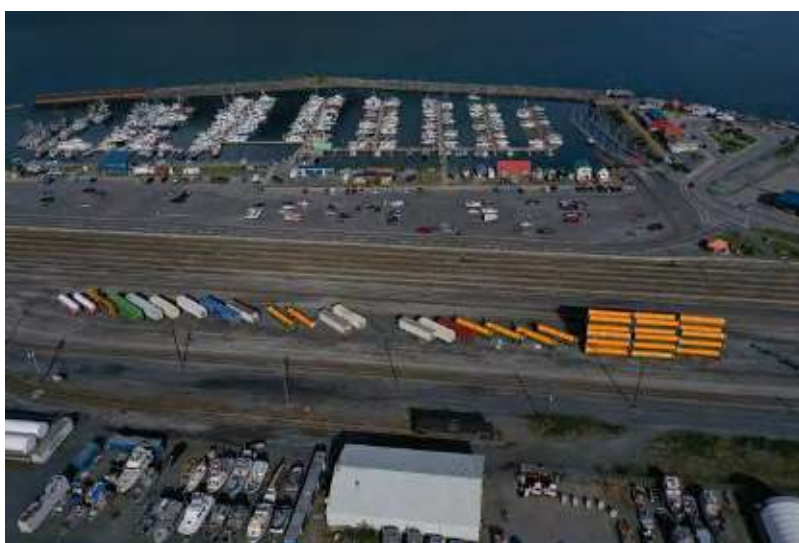


Photo 10: ARRC Rail Yard in Whittier

²⁸ Sound Opportunities: Economic Growth for the Prince William Sound Region

The rail yard and switching tracks extend the full length of the Whittier Core Area, which consists of residential, industrial, and commercial areas. An at-grade crossing of the rail yard is located near the Whittier Creek Bridge. When train switching operations occur, trains occupy the Whittier creek Bridge and traffic entering or exiting Whittier Street must wait. This wait can cause traffic delays and bottlenecks. Although a pedestrian underpass was constructed in 2001 to connect the residential part of Whittier with the waterfront, there is no alternative vehicular access across the railroad operations area. The 2012 Railroad Master Plan for Whittier includes the future recommended action:

Work with City to develop future options to reduce traffic delays at the major railroad/highway crossing adjacent to Whittier Creek.

Marine Transportation

Rail Barge Dock

Barge traffic in and out of Whittier consists of a weekly Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)/Alaska Marine Line, LLC (AML)²⁹ barge and a Canadian National barge that calls in Whittier once every 11 to 12 days. Seasonal increase in summer rail barge traffic could be up to three barges per week calling in Whittier.³⁰



Photo 11: Rail Yard and Dock Area

²⁹ Alaska Marine Lines Barge Sailing Schedules, <http://www.lynden.com/aml/barge-schedule.html>

³⁰ City of Whittier

Lynden Transport operates weekly 420-foot rail barges between Seattle and Whittier under contract with ARRC. The rail barges, which carry approximately 50 rail cars each trip plus other freight, provide a marine extension of the Alaska Railroad, linking it to other rail systems in the Lower 48 and Canada. In Whittier, the Alaska Railroad unloads the barges and the rail cars that are routed to their destinations along the Alaska rail belt. A barge leaves Seattle every Tuesday and takes approximately eight days to reach Whittier.

In addition to Lynden Transport's Seattle containers, CN Aquatrain, a division of Canadian National Railway, ships goods to Whittier from Prince Rupert, British Columbia.



Figure 5: Canadian National Railway Shipping Route

Cruise Ships

Running May through September, cruise ships stop in Whittier two-to-three times per week. There is a floating dock and an embarkation building located on the northwest end of town just west of Whittier Creek. The facilities are owned by Whittier Dock Enterprises, LLC. The dock and 20,000 square-foot building can accommodate one cruise ship docking each day.

Unlike a port of call, this dock provides a “turnaround” visit for these massive ships, which range in size up to 950 feet and 90,000 tons. Cruise ships call at the Port of Whittier due to its proximity to Anchorage and tourism venues throughout Southcentral Alaska.



Photo 12: Cruise Ship at the Deep-water Cruise Ship Dock

Exhibit 10 shows the number of cruise ship calls in Whittier from 2007 through 2019 and Exhibit 11 shows the number of passengers traveling to Whittier via cruise ship from 2007 through 2016. According to the State of Alaska’s 2017 report on Commercial Passenger Vessel Excise tax, the decrease in cruise ships after 2010 can be attributed to the loss of Carnival Spirit, which brought in approximately 35,000 annual visitors to Whittier between 2005 and 2009. Since then, the number of overall passengers traveling to Whittier rebounded through 2013 and then began to decline again until 2018 when there was an uptick in numbers.

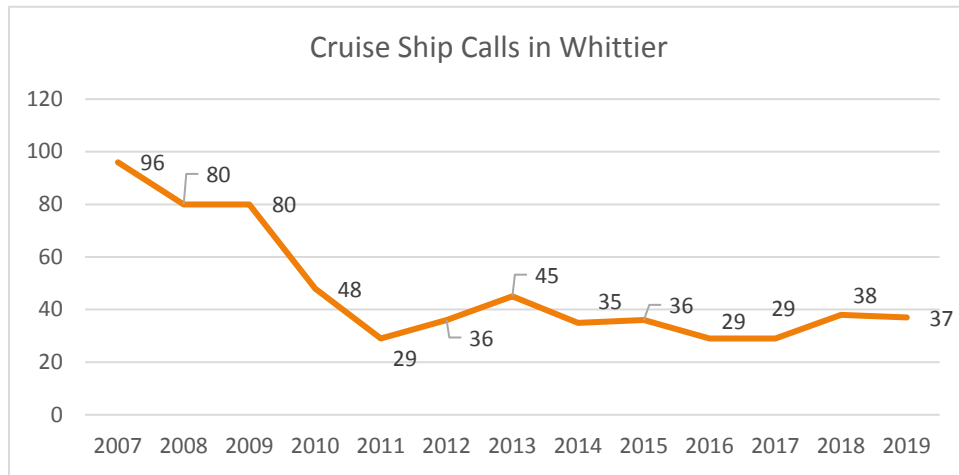


Exhibit 10: Cruise Ship Calls in Whittier (2007-2019) ³¹ ³²

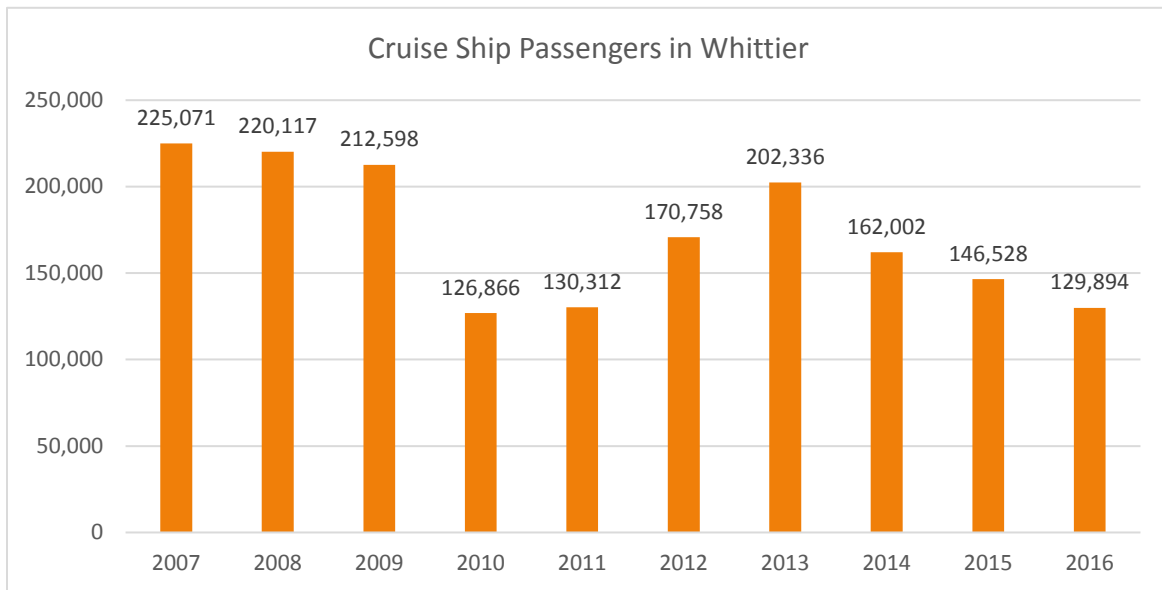


Exhibit 11: Visitors via cruise ships in Whittier (2007-2016) ³³

³¹ 2019 numbers based on scheduled cruises

³² Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska

³³ State of Alaska: Commercial Passenger Vessel Excise Tax (2007-2016)

Ferry System

The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) provides routine ferry service to the community of Whittier. Due to recent changes in funding, as of 2019, AMHS serves Whittier approximately once per week between the months of April and September. Embarking from the Port of Whittier, AMHS passengers access communities across the Gulf of Alaska, transferring between vessels for travel as far west as Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands. AMHS provides direct connections from

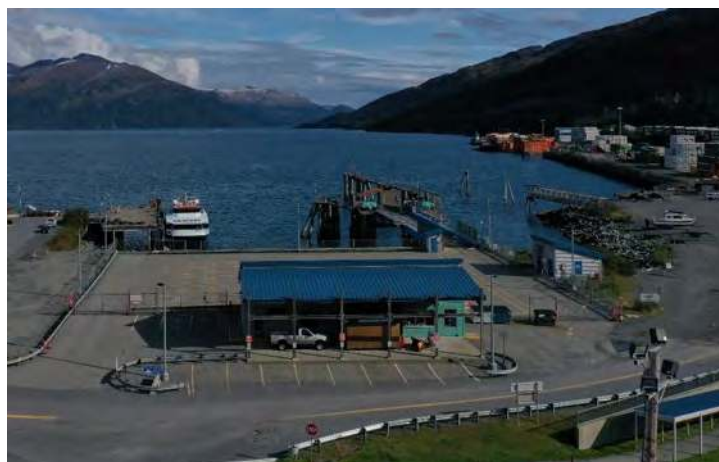


Photo 13: Ferry Dock and Terminal

Whittier to Auke Bay, Bellingham, Chenega Bay, Homer, Kodiak, Ketchikan, and Yakutat. For most current ferry information go to: <http://dot.alaska.gov/amhs/schedules.shtml>.

Alaska Marine Highway System Traffic

	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	% Change 2014-2015
Port Departures	340	380	413	375	405	320	-21%
Embarking Passengers	18,712	21,323	20,143	18,041	20,543	16,851	-18%
Disembarking Passengers	21,672	24,933	22,724	20,917	23,697	19,488	-17.80%
Embarking Vehicles	8,326	8,945	8,830	7,771	8,528	7,082	-17%
Disembarking Vehicles	8,916	10,026	9,413	8,220	9,110	7,598	-16.60%

Table 7: AMHS Passenger Traffic in Whittier (2010-2015) ³⁴

Table 7 shows annual figures relating to AMHS port departures, passenger volumes, and vehicle volumes at the Port of Whittier between 2010 and 2015. There is a peak in disembarking passenger volume in 2011, with a second high in 2014. However, overall passenger numbers demonstrate a post-2011 gradual declining trend.

³⁴ Alaska Marine Highway System Annual Traffic and Volume Report 2015

Small Boat Harbor

In 1972, construction of a 100-berth small boat harbor at the mouth of Whittier Creek was completed. In 1980, the State of Alaska expanded the harbor to 332 slips. In 2004, the City of Whittier received ownership of the facility from the Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (ADOT&PF). A 2010 project added 26 additional slips to the



Photo 14: Small Boat Harbor

harbor, but due to ongoing projects and configurations, the total number of slips available remains in flux. Currently, there are 360 harbor slips, which include space for approximately 60 “rafting” vessels. Depending on the size of the rafting vessel, it may be side tied on a slip and rafted off other vessels.

Due to overcrowding of the Harbor’s facilities, the Whittier Harbormaster had to stop issuing new annual transit moorage agreements.

As of July 2019, 360 names are on the wait list for a boat slip, down from 500 names in the 2012 Comprehensive Plan. In 1993, the waiting list contained 316 names.

The harbor is currently at capacity. The wait-time varies depending on the size of slip needed; however, the Harbormaster estimates the wait-time is between five to seven years. The harbor imposes a \$50 fee to join the waitlist, as well as a continuing annual charge of \$50 to remain on the list.

Table 8 shows the number of people currently on the harbor waitlist, per slip size, as of July 2019.

Slip Size	Slip waitlist #
0-28'	61
28-34'	100
34-37'	41
34-45'	41
45-54'	45
54-60'	30
60'	8
60'plus	34
Total	360

Table 8: Whittier Small Boat Harbor Slip Waitlist

Whittier Harbor Slip Sizes



Figure 6: Whittier Harbor Boat Slip Map

Figure 6 shows a map of the Small Boat Harbor and boat slips. Table 9 lists each float and the size of slips. The harbor berths both commercial and recreational vessels.

Local charter boats and many fishing boats regularly use the harbor. In addition, the harbor experiences short-term use from recreational boat owners who dry dock their boats in Whittier. Harbor facilities include a harbormaster's office, two boat launch ramps (one to launch/one to retrieve), one boat maintenance grid, and a fuel service depot. The Small Boat Harbor also features the Ocean Dock, which serves large, day-cruise vessels and the City Dock, which is used primarily by commercial fishers. A crane, boom, and net are available for unloading catches of shrimp, halibut, or salmon. A 30-ton boat lift may be used on the City Dock to hoist boats out of, or into, the water.

The parking lot at the Small Boat Harbor was paved in 2004, with approximately 185 fee-permits, 75 short-term customer spaces, 15 handicapped spaces, and eight short-term vessel maintenance stalls available for use.

Float	Size of Slip
B	45-60'
C	37-45'
D (even side)	34-37'
D (odd side)	36-39'
E	29-34'
F (even side)	0-29'
F (odd side)	29-34'
G	0-29'
H	0-29'
W	28-34'
X	0-29'
Z	28-34'

Table 9: Variation in slip size at Small Boat Harbor by Float

Charter and tour boat operations, fishing, and recreational vessels continue to fill the harbor beyond its capacity. At the current rate of increase in large vessel traffic, vessels from other harbors, and the potential for use by small-trailerred vessels coming in from Anchorage, moorage needs greatly exceed Whittier's current capacity. Construction of new harbors at the head of Passage Canal and Shotgun Cove could help alleviate the pressure to Whittier's Small Boat Harbor.

Private Marina

Cliffside Marina and Yacht Club is a privately funded and operated marina. Located on City-owned lands and tidelands west of Whittier Creek and the cruise ship dock, construction on the marina was completed in 2004. The marina offers 99 slips, all of which are individually owned, ranging in size from 40 to 100 feet.



Photo 15: Cruise ship dock and Cliffside Marina

Air Transportation

Airport

The Whittier Airport is located approximately one-mile northwest of the Whittier Core Area near the head of Passage Canal. The land is leased by the City from the Department of Defense.

The airport is a non-towered, general aviation facility with one gravel 1,480-foot by 58-foot runway. The airport property plan includes a gravel apron and taxiway in addition to the runway. The airport is not maintained in the winter. Travel by air is restricted by frequent adverse weather conditions with no scheduled air service between Whittier and other locations. The airport functions primarily as an emergency landing strip for small aircraft traveling westward through Prince William Sound that, due to weather or other hindrances, are unable to cross the Chugach Mountains at Portage Pass. Floatplanes also infrequently land in Passage Canal. There are no lighting systems, navigational aids, or fuel available at the airport, and there are no aircraft based there.

In 2003, the State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities completed a reconnaissance study that identified potential new locations for an airport within Whittier; however, at this time there is no plan to move the airport.

Chapter 9: Land Ownership, Land Use, and Land Management

Chapter 9 describes land ownership, present and future land use, land use regulation, and land management throughout Whittier.

Land Ownership

Land ownership within Whittier is held by the Alaska Railroad Corporation, U.S. Federal Government, State of Alaska, City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation, various private owners, and leased lands. Figures 7 and 8 show land ownership, while Figures 9 and 10 show land use.

Federal Government

The U.S. Federal Government – currently the largest landowner in Whittier – owns approximately 3,651 acres of land within Whittier city limits, including acreage within Chugach National Forest. In recent years, some of the federal land within Whittier has changed ownership, allowing the City of Whittier to gain control of more land within its city limits.

In August 2019, the City of Whittier and the Army Corps of Engineers reached an agreement allowing Whittier to acquire the former tank farm property at the Head of Passage Canal. The City of Whittier is currently in the process of acquiring the property.

State of Alaska and Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)

The State of Alaska, the second largest landowner in Whittier, owns approximately 2,776 acres held by its Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC). State property includes land along the coastline of Passage Canal and land in the Shotgun Cove area. The State received additional lands, most of which are in the Whittier Core Area, when it assumed ownership of the Alaska Railroad from the U.S. Federal Government in January 1985. The ARRC owns approximately 8,000 feet of waterfront in the Whittier Core Area, representing about 70% of Whittier's total waterfront area. In 2017, the City of Whittier and the ARRC partnered in a mutually advantageous land-swap agreement trading City land in Smitty's Cove for the Delong Dock property.

City of Whittier

The City of Whittier is the third-largest landowner within City limits. In 1984, State legislation transferred 600 acres of federal lands received by the State directly to the City. Two years later in 1986, the City received the working title to 228 acres in the Emerald Cove Subdivision (sections 8, 9, and 17). In 1994, the City also obtained a similar working title to 372 acres in the Shotgun Cove area (sections 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 21, and 22). For the City to obtain a patented title to these lands, the U.S. Federal Government must complete patent to the State, allowing the City to then survey the lands for ultimate and final patent to the City.

As of the November 2019, the Alaska Legislature and City of Whittier are currently working together to sign over the current Phase V parcel of Shotgun Cove Road to the City for development.

The City owns approximately 1,650 feet (15%) of Whittier Core Area waterfront.

At present, the City only owns a few small parcels in the Whittier Core Area. The City purchased these lands through the General Services Administration (GSA) when the U.S. Army ended its Whittier operations and sold its property. The City also owns the watershed above the Whittier Core Area.

Chugach Alaska Corporation

The third-largest landowner in Whittier – the Chugach Alaska Corporation – owns a 315-acre parcel in section 18, located just east of the Whittier Core Area and another 100 acres in two locations near the site of the proposed Shotgun Cove harbor.

Private Land

Fewer than 250 acres within Whittier city limits represents land parcels held by private interests other than the Chugach Alaska Corporation. Much of this land sits within the Whittier Core Area and the head of Passage Canal, with the remainder located along the beginning of Shotgun Cove Road. About 15% of the Whittier waterfront is privately held.

Some land at the head of Passage Canal is owned by an Anchorage-based developer who purchased through a GSA auction. Most other private lands were purchased during land sales by the City. The City plans to sell some of its lands at Shotgun Cove once the access road is complete.

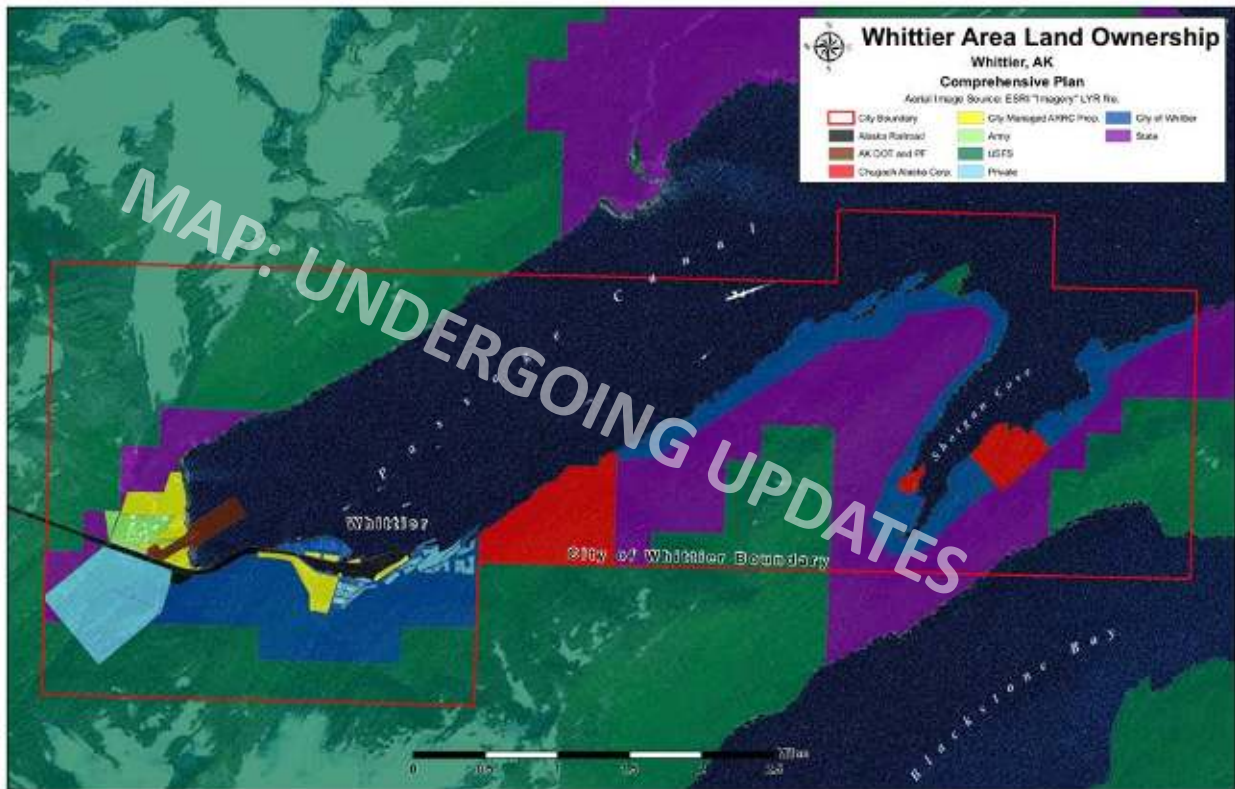


Figure 7: Map of land ownership in Whittier ³⁵

³⁵ Map pulled from the City of Whittier 2012 Comprehensive Plan, not necessarily produced in 2012

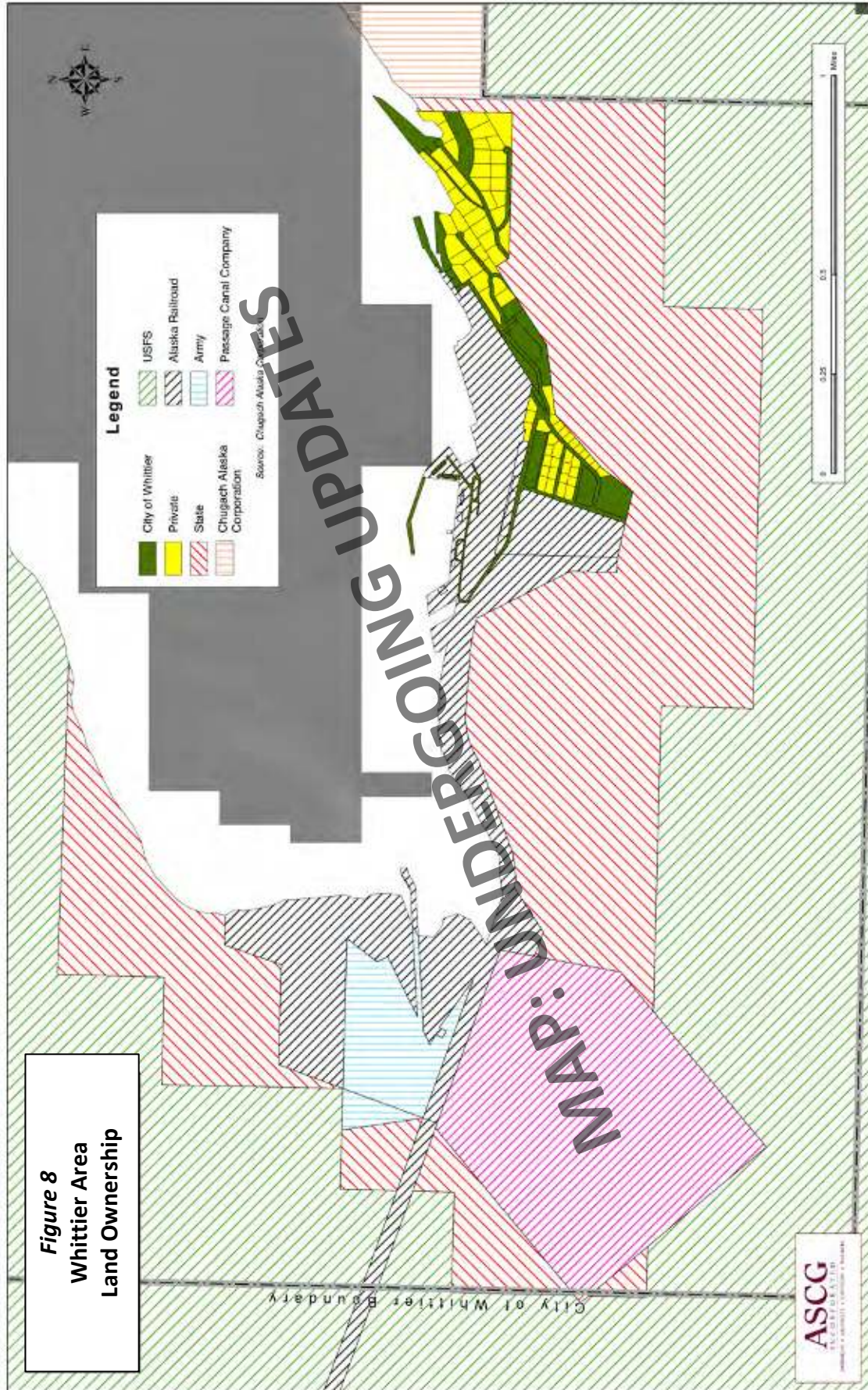


Figure 8: Whittier Core Area Land Ownership

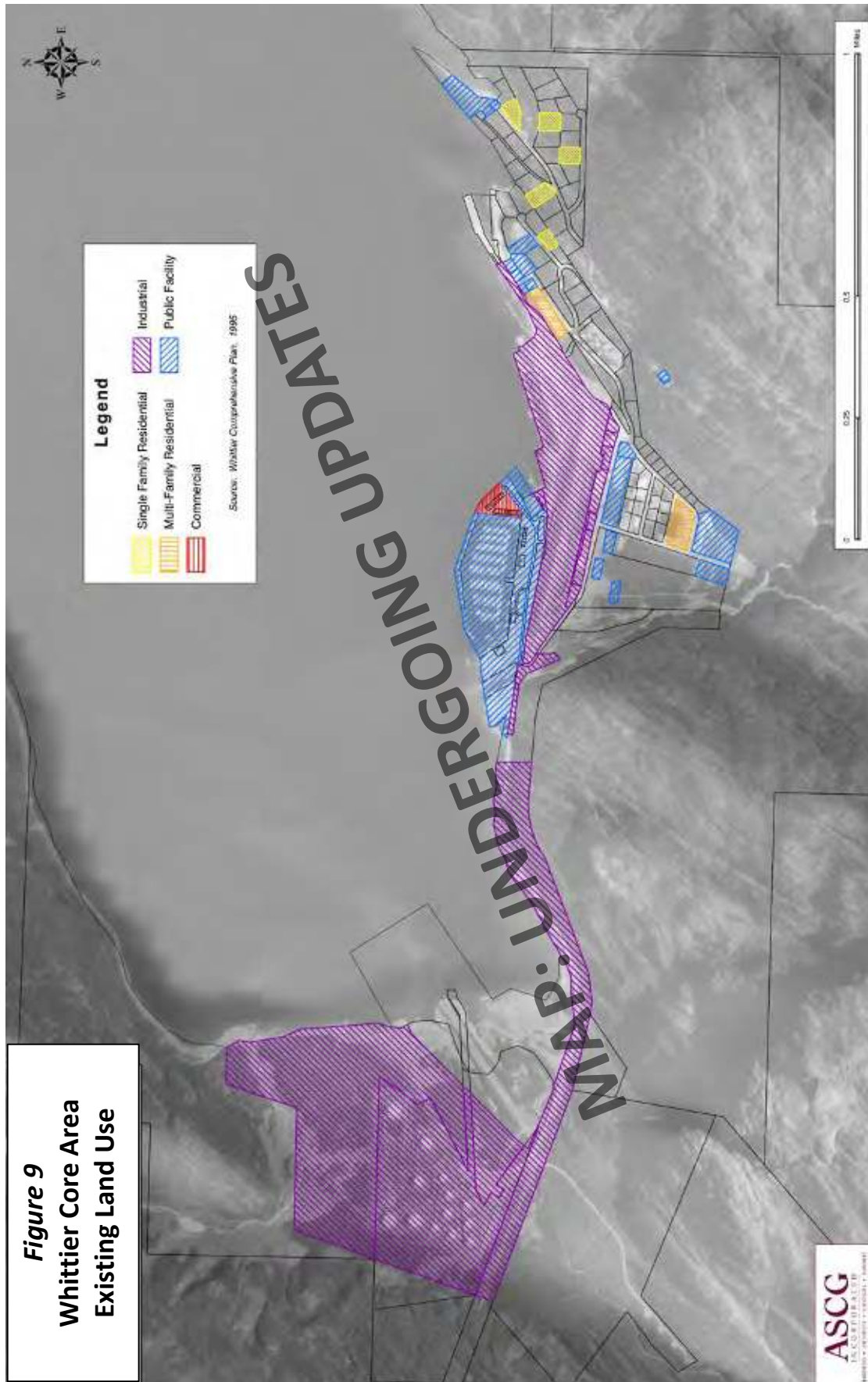


Figure 9: Map of Land Use

Leased Land

The Alaska Railroad leases approximately 5,000 feet of its waterfront property in the Whittier Core Area to the City.

West of the school, the City leases an approximately sixteen-acre parcel to a private developer for use as Creekside Parking and Campground. The City also leases lands in the Triangle Area to businesses such as shops, charter companies, and restaurants.

Existing Land Use

The existing land uses in Whittier includes industrial, commercial, public, seasonal single-family residential, and multi-family residential. Park lands outside of the core area and the head of Passage Canal are vacant. See Figure 8 for a map of existing land uses within the core area.

Industrial Use

Approximately 58% of Whittier’s developed land is used for industrial purposes. Industrial use occurs within the combined 212 acres of the Whittier Core Area and Head of Passage Canal. Major industrial land use includes the Alaska Railroad’s industrial and passenger operations, the roll-on and roll-off barge next to the Small Boat Harbor, and a seafood processing plant.

Residential

Whittier’s residents reside nearly exclusively in the Begich Towers Condominiums, the Whittier Manor, or the Anchor Annex Apartments. As a result, residential development represents a very small land area of approximately ten acres.

Commercial

Whittier’s commercial businesses are primarily located in the Whittier Core Area and the Harbor Triangle, with additional commercial businesses located in Begich Towers. There is no central business district and commercial use occupies only five acres of Whittier’s total land base.

Delong Dock is used by Copper River Seafood, Inlet Fish, and Whittier Seafood (formally Great Pacific Seafoods) to unload their fishing vessels.

Public

The Small Boat Harbor with adjacent parking area, boat and trailer storage, and supporting facilities comprises much of the existing waterfront development.

Smitty’s Cove – located east of the DeLong Dock – offers a barge ramp, kayak launch, and diving area. With year-round water access, Smitty’s Cove serves as an access point for diver search-and-rescue certification and training and is a popular destination for scuba divers in Alaska, both for those with experience and those who are gaining certification.³⁶

³⁶ <https://www.adn.com/alaska-life/we-alaskans/2017/01/31/amazing-underwater-world-revealed-at-whittiers-smittys-cove/>

Additional major public facilities include the five-acre school complex on City-leased land and the new Public Safety Building which houses the City's administrative offices, the Public Safety Department (Police, Fire, and EMS), as well as the Public Works Department. The City's water wells are in the Core Area.

Open and Recreational Space

Creekside Campground, a 10.5-acre private campground located west of the school, offers 50 camping spaces and is open seasonally – typically mid-April through late-October. The City has a five-acre campground at the Head of the Bay with approximately 30 camping spaces.

City land adjacent to Glacier Avenue and Whittier Street contains a small park.



Photo 16: Creekside Campground

Vacant

Over 900 acres of land within City limits is vacant or open space. However, much of this land has steep slopes, heavy water run-off, minimal topsoil, with some land even being glaciated. Of the 212 acres of land in the Whittier Core Area, only about 30 acres are uncommitted land suitable for development.

Future Land Use

Overall, future land use in the Whittier Core Area will continue to be mixed. Through this Comprehensive Plan, the City will strive to guide expansion of commercial businesses within the Core Area that minimizes use conflicts. Future development within the Core Area and Harbor District are outlined in the Chapter 13 Action Plan. At this time, the City is exploring the possibility of creating a Visitors Center and making several improvements in the Small Boat

Harbor including signage, improved walkways, and additional improvement projects highlighted in the Harbor Focus Area Action Plan. Additionally, the Prince William Sound Museum is exploring the possibility of building a new joint Whittier Community Center and Museum building.

Except for the fuel tank storage area, a short airstrip, and the City's former landfill area, most of the land at the Head of the Bay are presently undeveloped. More detailed plans for future use of this area are outlined in the Chapter 13 Action Plan, including a proposed land use map developed from input gathered at Whittier community meetings. The preferred future use for much of the lands at the Head of the Bay includes a mix of industrial and commercial harbor expansion, recreational developments, and business developments. Possible industrial uses include an offloading facility for fuel barges, an industrial dock or cruise ship dock, and dry-stack boat storage and repair.

Public input contributed to the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Update indicated that while industrial uses should continue at the Head of the Bay, it is also appropriate to develop and grow recreational uses in this area, particularly near the waterfront and Shakespeare Creek. Examples of recreational use include another campground, trails and hiking, kayak access area, fishing, boating, and a viewing platform for salmon at the creek.

Emerald Cove and Shotgun Cove

At present, most land east of the Whittier Core Area is undeveloped and left to its natural state. Prior to 2011, this land was part of the Chugach National Forest and was managed by the U.S. Forest Service. As of 2019, the City is still in the process of working with the State of Alaska to sign over official ownership of the land to the City. This is expected to happen during the 2020 Legislative season. Additionally, the City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation, and the Chugach National Forest are in the process of creating a land development plan for Emerald Cove and Shotgun Cove.

The City of Whittier completed Phase IV of the Shotgun Cove Road project in 2018 and is currently working on Phase V. The City intends to encourage Shotgun Cove development that supports a quality environment for year-round and seasonal residents, tourists, and recreational users. Completion of the proposed Shotgun Cove Road is a prerequisite for any full-scale development in the Shotgun Cove and Emerald Cove areas. Figure 11 shows the road design and conceptual layout of property parcels in this area. ³⁷

³⁷ CRW Engineering and City of Whittier

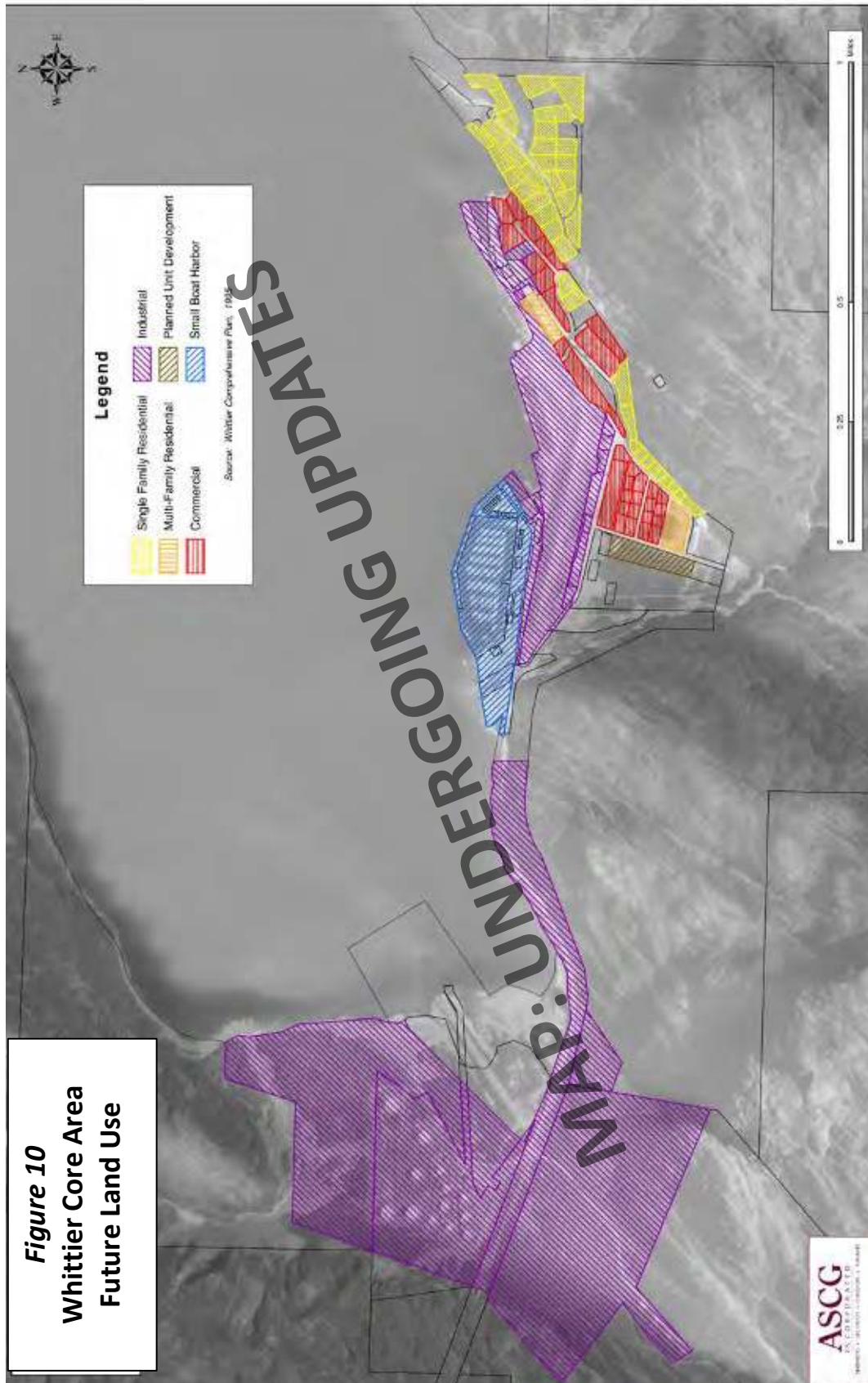
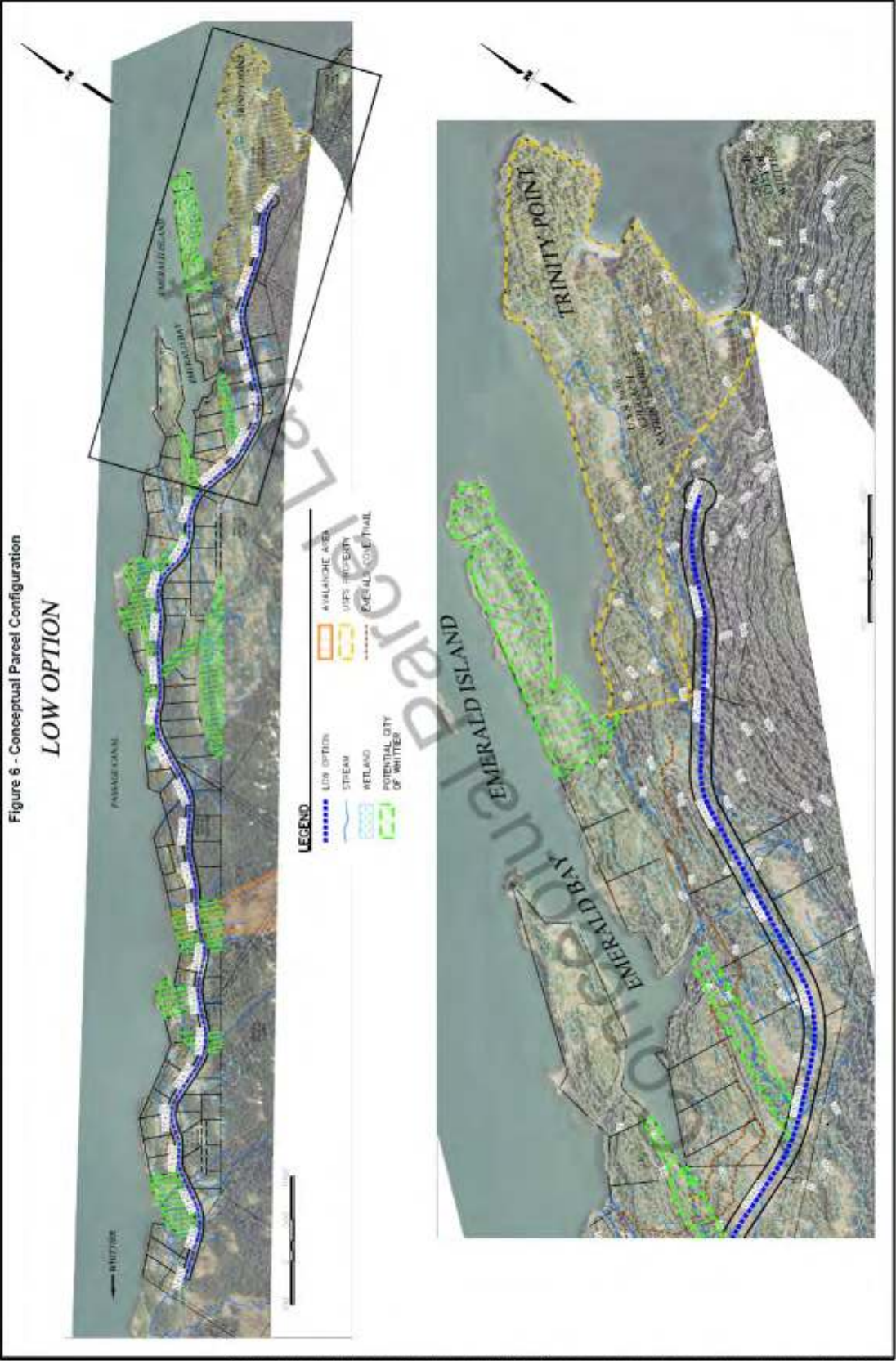


Figure 10: Whittier Core Area Future Land Use/Zoning Map



Land Use Regulation, Zoning, Cooperative Agreements, Land Lease and Management

Land Use Regulation

The State Municipal Code (Title 29 of the Alaska Statutes) governs the use of land in municipalities, cities, and boroughs. Title 29 was revised in 1972, reclassifying fourth-class cities as second-class cities. This impacted Whittier, which transitioned from a fourth-class city to a second-class city with the 1972 Code revisions. Whittier will remain a second-class city if its population remains below the required 400 resident threshold for first-class cities or until legislation changes again.

Whittier falls under AS 29.35.260, which states that a second-class city may provide for planning, platting, and land use regulation as provided by AS 29.35.180(a) for first and second-class boroughs. To carry out these powers, the City established a five-member Planning & Zoning Commission appointed by the City Council and adopted zoning and subdivision ordinances. Title 29 requires that a zoning code must be based on a land use plan in an approved comprehensive plan.

Alaska Statue 29.40.030 states, in part, that the comprehensive plan is a compilation of policy statements, goals, standards, and maps for guiding physical, social, and economic development, both private and public. Comprehensive plans include a land use plan component. Alaska Statue 29.40.040 further requires, in part, that in accordance with a comprehensive plan, and in order to implement the plan, the City shall adopt zoning regulations restricting the use of land and improvements by geographic districts.

Zoning Ordinance

The current City zoning ordinance, adopted in October 1984, uses a multi-district zoning approach comprising eight districts. These districts are single family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, industrial, small boat harbor, open space, planned unit development, and marine park.

The ordinance is based on a system of permitted and conditional uses for each of the eight districts. Building dimension requirements, such as minimum lot area, setbacks, building heights, and number of parking spaces are also identified as standards applying to each district.

Whittier Municipal Code Title 17.16 identifies how zones will be administered by the City, how nonconforming uses will be treated, and the processes and standards for determining variances, appeals and conditional uses, as well as City administered amendments. Figure 12 shows existing zoning.

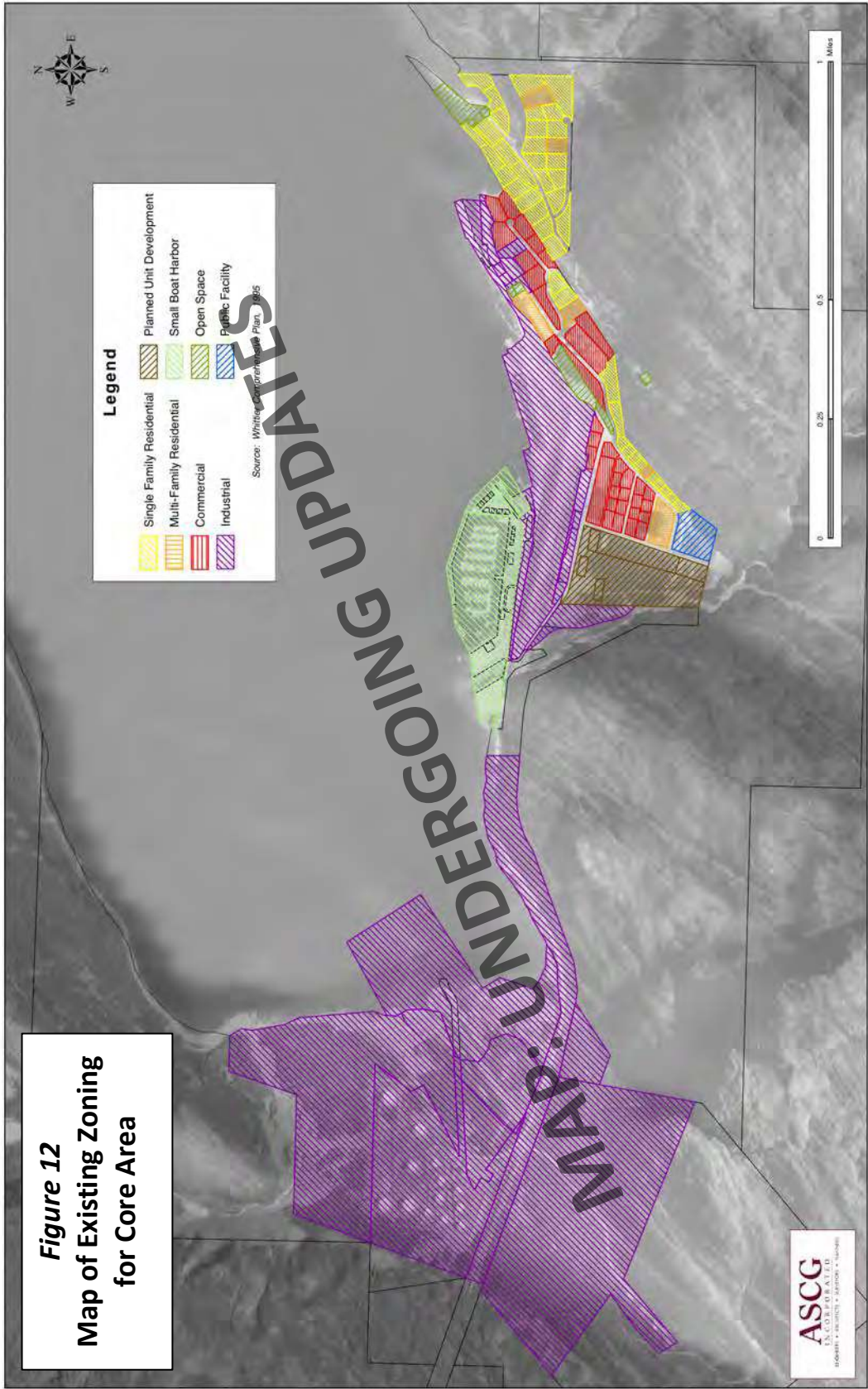


Figure 12: Map of Existing Zoning for Core Area

Cooperative Agreements

To effectively and comprehensively manage lands not owned by the City, the City utilizes cooperative agreements or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with landowners. In general, an agreement describes terms two or more parties agree to meet to better provide a mutually beneficial service.

In 1988, the City of Whittier signed a Ground Lease and Management Agreement with the Alaska Railroad Corporation. In the agreement, both parties recognized the importance of the ARRC land located in the Whittier Core Area. ARRC land represents about 46% of available and usable land within the Core Area that is considered vital to the City's development. The agreement granted the City authority to manage the land in exchange for payments to ARRC calculated on a percentage of sublease revenues.

The Ground Lease and Management Agreement also recognized the need to develop a mutually acceptable Land Management Plan within the Whittier Comprehensive Plan. The Management Plan should guide development of leases on ARRC property. The Agreement states that should the City seek to sublease or develop a portion of the leased premise in a manner that does not conform to the Comprehensive Plan, the City must first consult with ARRC. Should ARRC object to the proposed nonconforming development, the City shall not be allowed to proceed. The agreement is effective until November 12, 2033, with two additional 35-year terms of extension creating an agreement effectively up until November 12, 2103.

At present, the City utilizes other cooperative agreements with the State and Federal governments to manage public facilities and provide public services. One such example is found in the Shotgun Cove Road Project. Participants include the City of Whittier, the Federal Highway Administration/Western Federal Lands Highway Department, and Chugach Alaska Corporation. This agreement sets out the responsibilities of each party in the development of the road to Shotgun Cove.

An agreement was also signed between the City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation, and several private businesses to conduct initial planning, future management, and development of lands to the east of the Whittier Core Area, focusing on lands in Shotgun Cove and development concerns such as the provision of sewer and water services.

Municipal Land Disposal Program

When the City of Whittier formed, it purchased available core area lands from the Federal General Service Administration. The City retained ownership of some purchased parcels but disposed of most to generate operating funds for the newly incorporated city. Despite generating much needed funding, the sale ultimately restricted the City's ability to influence future development. This issue is further compounded by the fact the State of Alaska, through ARRC, remains Whittier's largest landowner. Most of the Whittier Core Area and 70% (about 8,000 feet) of Whittier's waterfront are owned by the State through ARRC. As a result, the City owns very little land in the core area and waterfront which it can develop to meet the community's current and future needs.

Since the initial land sale, the City has periodically held additional sales to dispose of small amounts of property it considers excess. Although the City has not prepared a long-term land

sales program, it has assessed needs for lands to be sold. If such a long-term land sales program is instituted, the City would need to identify lands for present and future public needs such as schools, roads, watersheds, etc., as well as identify the best means for development and disposal of such excess lands.

Land Leases

As an alternative to the sale of City lands, land may be leased for purposes that meet a public need. The City may determine that an undeveloped parcel of City land may be leased for a specific development activity over a specific period of years. Leasing rather than disposing of lands allows the City to generate revenue while retaining ownership and ultimate developmental direction.



Photo 17: Triangle Area

The Whittier Triangle Area offers one such example of land leased by the City to businesses who have established local enterprises such as shops, charter companies, and restaurants.

While the City owns some small parcels within the Whittier Core Area that could be leased to a developer, areas along Shotgun Cove Road offer more substantial acreage for potential leases.

Covenants

Covenants allow cities and municipalities to maintain a certain degree of control over land use even after lands have been sold through a City land sale. Covenants are requirements, restrictions, or limitations that a City can include in the deed of sale terms. Covenants can be implemented within Whittier's present form of multi-district zoning but are typically done sparingly as they are difficult to change or remove.

When the City disposes of land, it may wish to attach covenants to the sale that limit a buyer from subdividing the land or that require the buyer to build a structure within a specified time period. Implementing a covenant in this fashion helps prevent the holding of land for speculation without development or improvement and allows for more immediate and desired development within the community.

Chapter 10: Security

As the furthest north, year-round, ice-free port in Alaska with close proximity to Anchorage, Whittier is a critical port of entry for passengers and goods into Southcentral Alaska. As such, safety of its residents, visitors, and workers is a top priority for both the City of Whittier and outside agencies. Acknowledging Whittier’s strategic importance, outside agencies have invested, and must continue to invest, in security training, equipment, and planning in Whittier.

United States Coast Guard and Whittier Area Maritime Security (WAMS) Committee

As a port community, Whittier is affected by regulations mandated by the United States Coast Guard (USCG) to ensure security. If the USCG determines additional security measures are necessary to respond to a threat assessment or to a specific threat within the maritime elements of the national transportation system, the Coast Guard may issue a Maritime Security (MARSEC) Directive activating mandatory measures. Each facility owner or operator must comply with any instructions contained in a MARSEC Directive as issued by the Commandant of USCG. MARSEC levels range from Level 1: Normal, to Level 3: Incident Imminent. Specific guidelines are given for necessary actions at each level.

The Area Maritime Security Committee (AMSC) program was developed by the United States Coast Guard in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, which “substantially changed the risk profile of the Nation’s ports, waterways, coastal areas, Maritime Transportation System (MTS), and Maritime Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources (CI/KR)”.³⁸

In response, the Whittier Area Maritime Security (WAMS) Committee formed under USCG guidelines as part of the Maritime Transportation Security Act of 2002. The USCG Port Captain operating out of Anchorage chairs the committee. Whittier’s Director of Public Safety serves as the Vice Chairman with the Fire Chief, Harbormaster, and representatives of various agencies comprising the committee. Agencies involved include the Boatowners Association, Alaska Marine Highway System, Alaska Railroad Corporation, various cruise ship companies, Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel, and Cliffside Marina.

The WAMS Committee coordinates security and hazard planning efforts throughout Passage Canal. These efforts include planning for contingencies such as tsunamis and earthquakes, avalanches, oil spills, human attacks, and hazard mitigation. The United States Homeland Security Administration provides grants to fund security regulation compliance.

WAMS regulations specify that individual, maritime-related facilities within Whittier must develop and implement individualized security plans. Individual vessels that carry at least 150 passengers must file a vessel security plan with the Whittier Harbormaster and the Whittier Police Department. The Alaska Marine Highway System, Alaska Railroad Corporation, and Whittier Cruise Ship Terminal each fall within this mandate. The plans are kept on file by the Harbormaster and the Police Department.

³⁸ U.S. Coast Guard, <https://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/Inspections-Compliance-CG-5PC-/Office-of-Port-Facility-Compliance/Domestic-Ports-Division/amsc/>

Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS)

Due to the quantity of passengers carried, AMHS ferries docking in Whittier must meet all WAMS security regulations. In addition to meeting WAMS regulations, AMHS enforces strict security measures on travelers and vehicles such as:

- Adult passengers must present government-issued photo identification prior to boarding.
- Visitors are only permitted aboard AMHS vessels when accompanied by authorized personnel.
- All vehicles must be checked for hazardous materials.
- Unaccompanied vehicles are searched prior to onboarding.
- Unattended baggage is not permitted in ferry terminals.
- Only ticketed passengers may access baggage carts.
- Passengers receive notification that additional security measures may be imposed as needed.

Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC)

ARRC owns and operates two primary Whittier facilities which require WAMS security planning: the Prince William Sound Cruise dock and the rail barge slip that services traffic from Seattle, Washington, and Prince Rupert, British Columbia.

The Alaska Railroad Security Program organizes and maintains security operations for each of these two facilities. The security program is that of a standard railroad police force, consisting of a senior agent overseeing railroad security agents and other programs systemwide. Railroad agents are responsible for all aspects of rail security including emergency response management. A barge slip manager maintains daily operations at the facility. Contracted security officers perform rail yard entry control functions and any additional security functions during barge operations.

Whittier Cruise Ship Terminal and Cliffside Marina

Because of the high volume of passengers aboard large cruise ships, each cruise ship docking in Whittier employs a security officer aboard. Additionally, the Whittier Cruise Ship Terminal employs a facility security officer responsible for passenger security screenings prior to onboarding.

Due to its proximity to the Whittier Cruise Ship Terminal, Cliffside Marina also implements a high standard of security protocol. Marina management established its own Security/Rules Committee, which developed a security plan for the facility. Security measures implemented within the plan include fencing with card-activated gates at the gangways, security cameras with online access for the United States Coast Guard, and alarms to alert personnel to any security system tampering.

Chapter 11: Current and Future Economy

To fuel its local economy, Whittier emphasizes its unique and advantageous open-water location to capitalize on tourism, commercial and recreational boating, fishing, fish processing, and rail barge shipping. Its origins as a military outpost have led to a development emphasis on commercial-industrial land use. This is evidenced in Whittier’s large port, centralized railroad footprint, and unusual single-structure, dense housing complex.

Keeping one eye on the past and the other on the future, the City of Whittier continuously explores new and expanded economic development opportunities as unique as its community.

Economic development planning in Whittier:

- leads to job creation;
- builds a stable and diverse economy;
- improves residential quality of life;
- coordinates cross-sector development efforts;
- can be leveraged to attain State and Federal grants;
- and is often a requirement to obtain capital improvement project funding.

The following chapter explores Whittier’s current economics and potential areas for continued economic growth.

Current Economic Indicators

Community-based economic indicators include factors such as population, cost of housing, employment rates, median household income, and per capita income. In particular, per capita income trends provide an important measure of economic activity for a local area over time.

Table 10 compares Whittier’s economic indicators to those of the Valdez-Cordova Census Area and the State of Alaska as a whole, utilizing the most recent, reliable data available.

	Whittier	Valdez-Cordova Census Area	State of Alaska
Population	220	9,636	710,231
Per capita income	\$25,700	\$23,046	\$22,660
Median household income	\$47,500	\$48,734	\$51,571
Potential work force	143	7,567	458,054
Total employment	107	5,043	326,596
Unemployment rate	11.9%	6.3%	6.1%
Individuals below poverty level	7.1%	9.8%	9.4%

Table 10: Economic Indicator Comparison

The U.S. Census Bureau reported that the population in Whittier was 220 in 2010. The median household income in Whittier is estimated to be \$47,500 in 2000, and the per-capita income is estimated to be \$25,700. This is lower than both the Valdez-Cordova Census Area and the State of Alaska median and per-capita income.

Table 11 shows the potential work force in Whittier is estimated to be 143. Total employment in Whittier was estimated to be 107 people in 2000, with an unemployment rate of 11.9%. This is higher than the unemployment rate of 6.3% for the Valdez-Cordova Census Area and 6.1% for the State of Alaska. The percent of individuals below the poverty level is estimated to be 7.1% in Whittier, 9.8% in the Valdez-Cordova Census Area, and 9.4% in the State of Alaska.³⁹

Table 11 also describes Whittier’s top employment industries as of the 2000 Census. Transportation, accommodations and food services, public administration, and construction represent the largest local employer industries.⁴⁰

Type of Occupation	Estimated number of Employees
Total population 16 years and over	143
In labor force	107
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	18
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	17
Public administration	13
Construction	10
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	9
Educational, health and social services	7
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	4
Retail trade	4
Manufacturing	3
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	3

Table 11: Whittier Employment by Industry

³⁹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 and 2010 Census

⁴⁰ U.S. Census Bureau, 2000 Census

Local Government and School District

The City of Whittier employs an average of 23 -25 full-time staff and 10 seasonal workers (Table 12).

Department	Employees	Seasonal
City Administration	6	
Public Safety	7	1
Harbor	7	5
Public Works	4	2
Fire/EMS	1	2

Table 12: City of Whittier Employment (2019) ⁴¹

The Whittier School employs six full-time certified teachers and seven auxiliary staff (Table 13). Together, City government and local school district employment represent a significant portion of Whittier’s workforce.

Department	Employees
Full-time certified teachers	5
Full-time certified Special Education teacher	1
Full-time preschool teacher/aide (non-certified)	1
Full-time aide	1
Part-time aide	1
Secretary	1
Custodian	1
Maintenance	1
Breakfast cook	1

Table 13: Whittier School Employment (2019) ⁴²

The US government contracts with a local resident to operate the Post Office, which is open five days per week.

⁴¹ City of Whittier

⁴² Whittier School Staff

Whittier Businesses

Whittier businesses provide most goods and services that one would expect to find in a relatively small Alaskan community. As of October 2019, there are 73 active business licenses in Whittier which account for 60 individual businesses. Thirteen of those businesses offer charters, tours, and recreational rental services such as kayaks and paddle boards. Nine



businesses deal in some form of food service. Remaining businesses provide short-term accommodations, long-term housing, marine services, seafood processing, a laundromat, painting services, transportation, towing services, janitorial services, IT services, marina services, and two retail locations.

The Greater Whittier Chamber of Commerce maintains a website with information on local businesses and helpful visitor information. The website may be found at:

<https://www.whittieralaskachamber.org/>.

Recreation and Tourism

Travel and tourism are each important components of Whittier's local economy and Alaska's statewide economy. Estimates for 2017 show out-of-state visitors accounting for 43,300 annual jobs statewide (10% of all employment) with the visitor industry generating \$1.5 billion in labor income and \$4.5 billion in economic output.⁴³

Tourism most dramatically impacts the food and beverage industry across Alaska, directly generating 6,900 jobs in 2017, followed closely by accommodations, which generated 6,200 jobs statewide. The same State of Alaska report found that between 2008 and 2017, out-of-state visitors increased in volume by 15%. Tourism statewide is on the rise – a trend that is likely to continue into the foreseeable future.

With close proximity to Anchorage and a year-round ice-free port, Whittier is a center for marine-based tourism in Prince William Sound. Whittier's economy relies heavily on its marine location, its multi-use port, and Small Boat Harbor facilities.

⁴³ Economic Impact of Alaska's Visitor Industry 2017, https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/6/pub/TourismResearch/VisitorImpacts2016-17Report11_2_18.pdf?ver=2018-11-14-120855-690

Table 15 compares guided fishing trips in Whittier to similar trips in both Valdez and other Prince William Sound communities.⁴⁴

If recreation and tourism trends continue as expected, Whittier's economy, alongside the State as a whole, will continue to see growth in this sector.

Saltwater Charter/Guided Fishing			
Community	Businesses	Vessels	Total Trips
Whittier	18	20	580
Valdez	27	31	732
Other	5	6	134

Table 15: Charter / Guide Fishing Comparison

According to a 2016 report,⁴⁵ tourists report visiting Prince William Sound to engage in the following activities:

- Vacation/pleasure (79-84%)
- Shopping (70-77%)
- Wildlife Viewing (68-73%)
- Hiking/Nature Walks (51-53%)
- Day Cruises (53-57%)



Photo 19: The Inn at Whittier

Visitors spending a night in Whittier can choose from a variety of overnight accommodations including two local hotels, three condo rentals, two cabin rentals, and two campgrounds. Each hotel offers an attached restaurant. Additionally, there are numerous businesses and eateries that also serve Whittier visitors. Some of the businesses are seasonal in nature and only operate during the summer tourist season.

Day-Cruise and Charter Operations

Several local companies offer a variety of daytrip / cruise-based excursions into Prince William Sound. Such tours provide opportunities for visitors to experience the Sound's unique wildlife and natural beauty from the water. Boat tours last anywhere from a half-day to a full day so that visitors often have opportunity to further explore the community and patronize local businesses before or after their tours.

⁴⁴ Sound Opportunities: Economic Growth for the Prince William Sound Region

⁴⁵ Ibid.

In addition to day cruises, visitors may choose to charter smaller vessels for tailored, multi-day excursions or private fishing trips. Boats can also be chartered to provide water taxi services for kayakers, scuba divers, hunters, and hikers who wish to enjoy independent excursions in Prince William Sound's more remote locations. Bare boat rentals are also available for independent excursions.

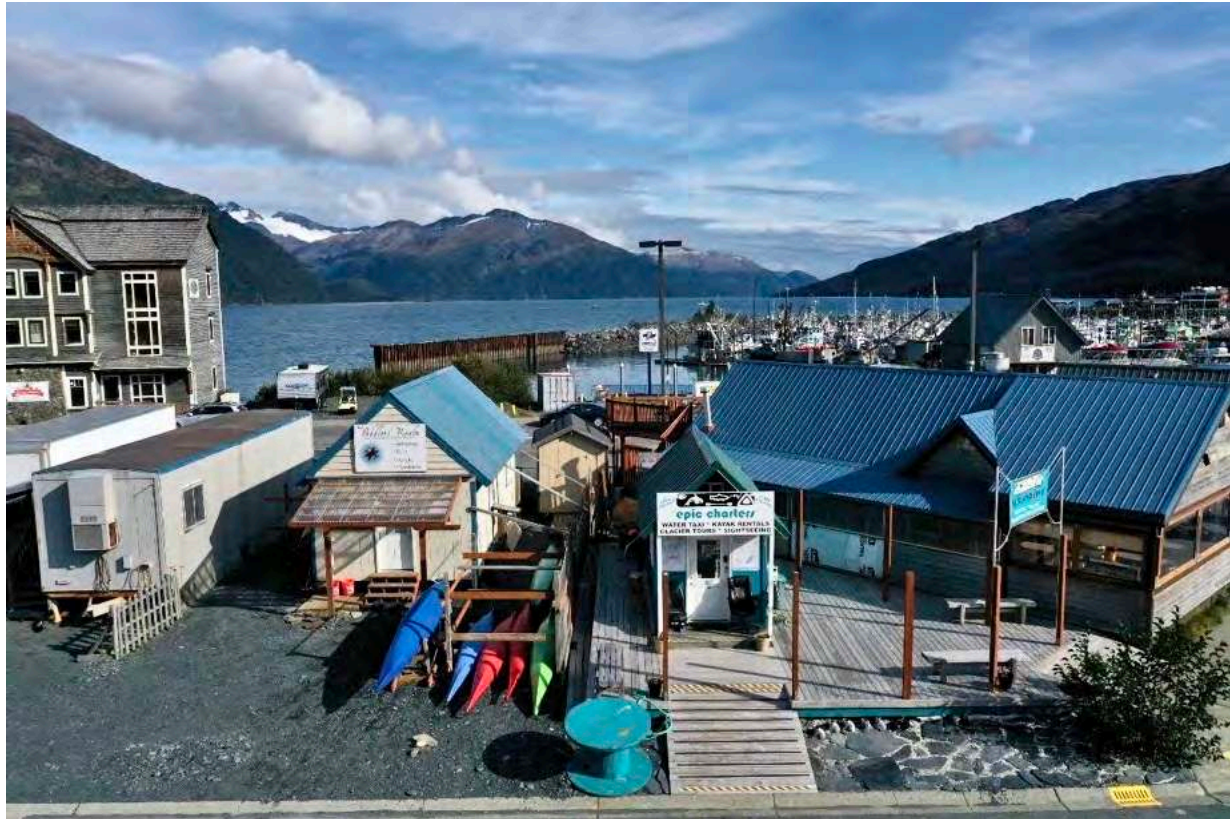


Photo 20: Charter Services in Whittier

Cruise Ship Operations

During the 2019 summer cruise season, 37 ships called to port in Whittier. In 2016, 129,894 cruise ship passengers traveled through Whittier. Despite high cruise-based visitor numbers, Whittier's local businesses do not often see a major increase in revenues from such visitors as they often transition directly from pre-arranged train transportation packages to the ship or vice versa.

For more historical data and information on cruise ships and passenger volumes in Whittier, see Chapter 8.

Recreational and Commercial Boating

The City of Whittier generates revenue from the Small Boat Harbor through three primary means:

- Boats moored year-round in Whittier pay both moorage fees based on vessel length and property tax on their vessels.
- Launch fees are charged to users who launch and retrieve boats from Small Boat Harbor ramps.
- Commercial charter and tour vessels pay an embarkment and disembarkment fee for each passenger aboard.



Photo 21: Small Boat Harbor

More information on the Whittier Small Boat Harbor can be found in Chapter 8.

Other Recreational Activities

Natural beauty and environmental wonders of Prince William Sound’s wilderness entice recreational visitors from around the world. Camping, hiking, kayaking, skiing, scuba diving, jet skiing, snowmobiling, recreational hunting, and fishing all draw people to Whittier. Resource management agencies and Prince William Sound tour operators view the Sound as wilderness, and both believe this quality is what attracts tourists and recreational users to the Sound. Recreational boating is also attractive in the Sound because the waters are more protected than many others in the region.

Passage Canal and the fjords and coves of Prince William Sound are popular with recreational users. Recreational resources in the Sound include fish, wildlife viewing, hunting, wilderness scenery, berry picking, state marine parks, public cabins, camping, and remote coves and beaches. According to the Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement “The Forest Service has permitted commercial guided activities, such as camping accessed by sea kayaking, hiking, and hunting, and the reported guided use has increased slightly over the past five years.”⁴⁶

The report also says that use levels are higher in the western part of the Sound than the eastern, likely due to easy Sound access from Whittier. One of the highest use areas in Prince William Sound is Blackstone Bay, which is south of Whittier.

⁴⁶ Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan, pg. 160,
https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd658678.pdf

Whittier’s hiking trails are described in detail in Chapter 8. These serene trails offer scenic views and ample opportunity for well-being, fitness, adventure expeditions for both hikers and mountain bikers alike.

On a typical weekend day during the summer, up to 250 kayakers could begin a trip from Whittier,⁴⁷ some embarking directly from the Small Boat Harbor with others hiring charter boats to access remote launch sites such as Blackstone Bay.



Photo 22: Cove Creek

The United States Forest Service (USFS) employs a kayak sea ranger program to assist and monitor this rapidly growing recreational activity. They have found it necessary to limit the number of campers allowed at some of the more popular kayaker camping locations in the area.

Winter Recreation

While no specific development plans related to winter recreation currently exist, winter recreation has been identified as a potential economic growth opportunity for the season with the lowest visitor counts. Cultivating unique winter recreation opportunities in Whittier could increase winter visitor numbers and build opportunities to grow and enhance winter business services.

More information regarding winter recreation ideas can be found in the Stakeholder Interview and Action Plan sections of this comprehensive plan.

The USFS updated the Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan in 2019. The City of Whittier supports the selection of Alternative B for the plan to allow for continued winter recreation access for visitors and residents alike.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Verbal conversation with Whittier staff

⁴⁸ Chugach National Forest Land Management Plan Final Environmental Impact Statement, pg. 232, https://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fseprd658681.pdf

Commercial Fishing

Fishing is an important contributor to the economy across Prince William Sound and Alaska as a whole. Approximately 56,800 workers are directly employed for work relating to Alaska's seafood industry. The industry produced \$4.2 billion worth of first wholesale seafood products statewide in 2016.⁴⁹

Commercial fishing and fish processing remain important contributors to Whittier's local economy. More than 300 fishermen sell their catch to five tenders who in turn sell to three fish processors, one of which is local. Fish varieties harvested near Whittier include salmon, cod, halibut, herring, rockfish, spotted prawns, and coon-striped shrimp.

Gill-netters represent the largest portion of Prince William Sound's commercial fishing fleet with a remainder of seiners, trawlers, pot shrimpers, and long-line fishermen. All species of salmon, from the Copper River as well as Prince William Sound, comprise most of the local processing alongside halibut and black cod. Approximately 35% of fish are packaged and shipped fresh from Whittier with the majority shipping to wholesale distributors in the Lower 48. The remaining 65% is frozen with more than half sold across the United States and the rest to foreign markets.

The Wally Noerenberg Hatchery, constructed in 1985, is the closest fish hatchery to Whittier. It is located approximately 20 miles east of Whittier in Lake Bay on the southern tip of Ester Island in the South Ester Island State Marine Park. The hatchery is the largest pink salmon production facility in North America. It is currently permitted for 148 million pink, 153 million chum, 4 million Coho, and 50 thousand chinook salmon eggs annually.⁵⁰ Other Prince William Sound hatcheries are in Valdez, Main Bay, Sawmill Bay, and Cannery Creek. Alaska's salmon hatcheries account for 4,700 jobs annually and \$218 million in total labor income.⁵¹

Marine Services

Marine services account for much of Whittier's industrial, commercial, and recreation/tourism employment. Both private and public sectors are involved in delivering marine services.

Several local firms offer supplies and services to private and commercial marine clients. Services include marine fuel, marine repair and welding, dry boat storage, self-storage warehousing, and charter services. Two companies provide regional barge transportation throughout Prince William Sound.

Shoreside Petroleum has operated under a City lease since 1992, with 1,000 square feet of waterfront dock and a fuel storage capacity of 45,000 gallons. In addition to providing marine fuel for recreational and commercial vessels, heating and automotive fuel is also available.

⁴⁹ The Economic Value of Alaska's Seafood Industry, <https://www.alaskaseafood.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/AK-Seafood-Impacts-Sep2017-Final-Digital-Copy.pdf>

⁵⁰ <https://pwsac.com/hatcheries/wally-noerenberg/>

⁵¹ Economic Impacts of Alaska's Salmon Hatcheries, <http://www.mcdowellgroup.net/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/economic-impact-of-alaskas-salmon-hatcheries.pdf>

Future Economic Development Opportunities

Whittier’s 2020 Comprehensive Plan reflects extensive public engagement with residents, local stakeholders, community members, City Council, and the Planning and Zoning Commission. To collect community input, the City engaged in public meetings, commission meetings, working groups, and formed a Comprehensive Plan Core Team.

Public input concluded that Whittier’s Core Area, Small Boat Harbor, and Head of the Bay area offer readily accessible opportunities for local economic expansion. Chapter 13 outlines a synthesis of the ideas and input generated for these Focus Areas through the comprehensive planning process. Development in and around these areas could meet Whittier’s immediate development needs, while long-term and future development possibilities remain in the Shotgun Cove area with an expansion of Shotgun Cove Road.

While many development possibilities were discussed throughout, additional economic development opportunities could be explored through the development of a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). More information regarding the 2020 comprehensive planning process and a complete action plan can be found in Chapter 13.

As part of the *Sound Opportunities: Economic Growth for the Prince William Sound Region*, Whittier is referenced in two action items within the report’s action plan:

“Increase tax revenues from tourism activities by an average of 2.6 percent per year over the period of 2016 – 2020. (transient occupancy, car rental, and cruise ship transfer taxes in Cordova, Valdez, and Whittier)” (pg.97).

“Advocate for the formation and coordination of Local Emergency Planning Committees (LEPCs) in Chenega Bay, Cordova, Tatitlek, and Whittier.” As part of a task to “Increase regional preparedness for natural and man-made disasters.” (pg. 98)

Additional components of the *Sound Opportunities* report are located throughout this comprehensive plan in sections relating to tourism, freight, and population. To read the complete *Sound Opportunities: Economic Growth for the Prince William Sound Region* report visit https://www.commerce.alaska.gov/web/Portals/6/pub/PWSEDD_CEDS2016-2021.pdf?ver=2018-10-09-143321-893.

Shotgun Cove

The State of Alaska deeded 600 acres of land in the Shotgun Cove area to the City of Whittier. Currently, the City plans to develop a townsite on the land with the goal of creating local employment opportunities as well as an attractive location for visitor accommodations and recreation.

Shotgun Cove development presents enticing growth opportunities across the community. A variation and increase in housing stock would provide more housing diversity for existing and potential Whittier residents. Additional short-term accommodations could increase the number of visitors who stay overnight in Whittier. With an influx of residents and visitors, the local tax base would increase, providing additional revenue for public services. A rise in residents and visitors would also contribute new sales at local businesses and could lead to additional development opportunities across the community.

Decision Point State Marine Park is located about two miles beyond Shotgun Cove on the point between Passage Canal and Blackstone Bay. While the park is currently accessible via water, development in the Shotgun Cove area could lead to trail expansion into Decision Point.

Because land within the Whittier Core Area is limited, expansion into Shotgun Cove is often considered one of the most promising development opportunities for the community. Land ownership in the area of Shotgun Cove is shown in Figure 13.

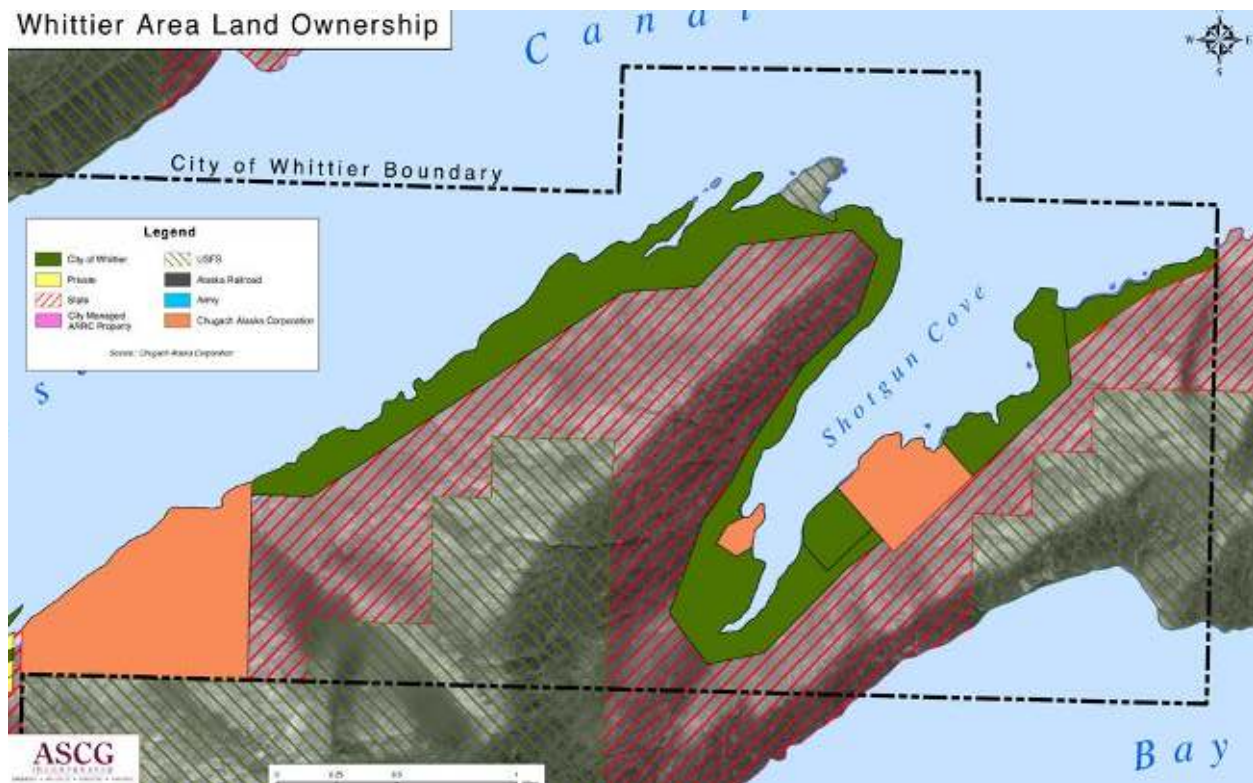


Figure 13: Map of Shotgun Cove Land Ownership ⁵²

⁵² Map pulled from the City of Whittier 2012 Comprehensive Plan, not necessarily produced in 2012.

Chapter 12: Stakeholder Interviews, Community Visioning, and Work Groups

Community members and stakeholders directly contributed to the 2020 comprehensive planning process via the following avenues:

- Stakeholder interview data was collected both in-person and via written response from 11 different local stakeholders.
- Public meetings were specifically designed to collect community member input.
- A May 2019 community-wide meeting created vision and direction for the 2020 Comprehensive Plan as well as developed specific focus areas to include within the Comprehensive Plan.
- Work groups formed to further develop Action Plan areas as identified during the May 2019 community visioning meeting.
- A comprehensive plan “core team” guided planning efforts and ensured accuracy and community representation throughout plan development.

In addition to meetings specifically tailored to the development of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan, input was provided, and planning efforts discussed as a part of the following meetings:

- Whittier City Council Comprehensive Plan Work Session – April 23, 2019
- Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission – May 1, 2019
- Whittier Chamber of Commerce – May 10, 2019
- Whittier City Council – November 12, 2019
- Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission – November 13, 2019
- Whittier City Council, Comprehensive Plan Final Approval - Tentatively Jan. 21, 2020

Stakeholder Interviews

Stakeholder interviews contributed important community input and perspective to the priorities, goals, and focus areas of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. Stakeholder contributions were collected via in-person interviews and written feedback. Each interview employed three components: identifying changes to Whittier since the 2012 Comprehensive Plan, identifying current community assets and limitations, and identifying opportunities to build a prosperous future for Whittier.

Major Themes and Stakeholder Suggestions

Three major themes developed within stakeholder interviews:

- Whittier has changed a lot over time.
- Unknowns surrounding current land-use planning have created uncertainty for the development and future of Whittier.
- Whittier needs to cultivate strong relationships to build a successful future.

Stakeholders found much of Whittier’s challenge to be encompassed in an identity seemingly split between two extremes: a beautiful natural location offering many unique resources contrasted against an industrial community landscape.

Stakeholders stressed clear and accurate communication from City leadership and staff is vital to the health and well-being of the greater Whittier community. Beyond communication, stakeholders believe the enforcement of existing codes must be better incorporated into City practices to enhance local business opportunities.

Stakeholders acknowledge that relations between the City of Whittier and various partner entities have greatly improved through recent years, though they also understand that existing relations must be maintained and continuously built upon in order to remain effective. Some stakeholders believe the City should continue to intentionally grow, expand, and improve existing partner relationships.

Stakeholders offered various suggestions for enhancing City engagement across the community. One such suggestion dealt with creating term-limits on City Council members to promote a balance of new perspectives and opinions within City government. Another suggestion referenced a desire for greater transparency on project funding and spending as well as information regarding project selection and prioritization. Several stakeholders noted the Whittier Parks and Recreation department has positively impacted Whittier’s residents and visitors alike and would like to see their continued involvement in future projects.

Stakeholders hope to see the 2020 Comprehensive Plan actively engaging and guiding City planning efforts through the coming five years.

Areas of Alignment

Community Assets

Time and again, Whittier’s location has been identified as one of the community’s strongest assets. Among assets linked to location, stakeholders referenced Whittier’s proximity to Anchorage, pristine natural beauty, opportunities for hiking, and its position as a gateway to Prince William Sound.

Additional identified assets:

- The Whittier School
- An increase in community members engaged in community affairs (due to a recent population increase)
- Waterfront and Harbor infrastructure
- Role as a critical connection point for multi-modal transportation, connecting the State of Alaska to the Lower 48 and Canada

Community Opportunities

Whittier’s top opportunities, as identified by stakeholders, primarily fell into one of two categories: infrastructure and tourism. Each opportunity builds upon Whittier’s existing assets and community strengths. Through all opportunities, stakeholders desire Whittier’s

development to remain a community-driven process rather than implementing a top-down approach.

Infrastructure-based Opportunities:

- Collaborate with the Alaska Railroad Corporation to open land for development
- Spur development within the Harbor and waterfront areas, Shotgun and Emerald Coves, and Smitty's Cove/underwater marine diving park
- Further develop Head of the Bay area by considering a deep-water port
- Improve transportation infrastructure such as sidewalks and parking in the Harbor and Triangle areas in order to improve business access.
- Work towards GIS system to validate physical addresses.

Tourism-related Opportunities:

- Promote opportunities for existing and new local businesses to grow and expand
- Encourage tourism by marketing Whittier as a prime visitor destination with ample recreation opportunities (shift away from common perception of Whittier as a "gateway" location)
- Capitalize on and expand recent increases in winter recreation
- Improve signage across community to promote wayfinding, access to local attractions, and overall community beautification
- Improve ramp at Smitty's Cove for divers

Community Limitations

Despite Whittier's many assets and opportunities, stakeholders worry that some community limitations could affect development efforts across the community. Most stakeholders identified a limited quantity of land available for development as a primary community limitation.

Overall transportation congestion around the city resonated as a common concern. Some stakeholders suggested that traffic congestion issues were compounded by the Harbor District's attempt to fit several varying types of resources into a limited area leading to commercial fishing operations, recreational boats, cruise ships, pedestrians, and vehicles all vying for adequate space in which to conduct themselves and their businesses.

Stakeholders noted that a one-way tunnel with controlled openings inherently limits road access to Whittier, especially during winter months with more limited opening times. In the summertime, with higher visitor numbers, sharp influxes of traffic coordinating with tunnel opening times causes congestion and bottlenecks.

Although some stakeholders noted the potential for increased winter recreation, others felt that the weather in Whittier is too harsh and unpredictable for Whittier to become an attractive winter visitor destination. Stakeholders voiced concern that the seasonality of the community, as well as limitations in infrastructure, could limit a growth in year-round activity.

Diverging Ideas

While several common themes and overlapping opinions and ideas emerged within stakeholder input, alignment was not unanimous and reflected a wide range of varying perspectives. Even

some areas that supported strong alignment among most stakeholders saw divergence in questioning sustainability, management, funding, feasibility, and optimal growth patterns.

While land development was generally viewed as favorable, some stakeholders raised questions regarding long-term maintenance responsibilities and potential strain on the City's operating capacity. Some input questioned the potential of long-term success in winter recreation opportunities, as revenues would be directly attached to seasonal weather patterns – a variable beyond the community's control.

While nearly all stakeholders considered the Head of the Bay area to be an area of opportunity for the community, it was not unanimously viewed as an area for prioritized development. Some questioned to what degree Whittier ought to encourage development in general and specifically development focused on increasing tourism and fish processing, with a fear that either could grow too big and negatively impact the community.

Whittier Community Visioning Meeting

On May 15, 2019, the City of Whittier hosted a community meeting in the Whittier Community School gymnasium to shape the vision and action plan focus areas of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan. A diverse group of 34 community members attended the meeting, contributing valuable perspectives, opinions, and ideas while identifying community assets and collaborating to craft new opportunities to proactively shape Whittier's future. With each participant as an equal stakeholder, this meeting provided an opportunity for Whittier's community to come together to establish common goals and strategies to shape their city's future.

To frame the meeting's conversation and encourage participants to focus on community assets and opportunities, the following "framing question" based on the City of Whittier's vision statement was provided for consideration:

Imagine if Whittier were a year-round community that leveraged its pristine natural environment and strategic location on Prince William Sound to generate a resilient economy that provided ample, first-rate facilities for residents and visitors of all ages? What would that look like?

Through the community visioning process, community members identified tourism, city beautification, the Head of the Bay area, and the Harbor District as key areas of importance. Community members found alignment between their ideas and desires for further development, growth, and improvements across these focus areas.



Photo 23: Whittier Community Visioning Meeting ⁵³

Extensive effort went into promoting community awareness of the public meeting. The meeting was publicized via word of mouth, posts to the community’s “What’s What in Whittier” Facebook group page, direct emails, flyers posted across the city, and at meetings of the Whittier Chamber of Commerce, City Council, and the Planning and Zoning Commission.

A local business generously partnered with the City to provide dinner for all meeting attendees, and several local businesses and individuals generously contributed substantial door prizes to increase community attendance and participation.

Collecting Community Input

Basic data was gathered during the meeting via a text-message-based polling platform with real-time results. The collected data was available for use throughout the community meeting, allowing community members to easily share perspectives and actively collaborate towards shaping short-term community goals that reflected long-term desired outcomes.

When asked, *“What are Whittier’s Greatest Assets?”* meeting participants identified Whittier’s proximity to Prince William Sound, the harbor and port areas, and the nature surrounding the city as the community’s top three assets.

When asked, *“What are some overlooked assets in Whittier?”* meeting participants identified trails and hiking opportunities as well as winter recreation opportunities as the community’s top two overlooked assets.

⁵³ May 15, 2019 at the Whittier School

Whittier's strongest assets:

1. Location/Assets:
 - a. Prince William Sound / Waterfront access
 - b. Proximity to Anchorage
 - c. Proximity to Chugach National Forest
2. Harbor / Deep-water port / Cruise ship dock
3. Nature
4. Churches
5. Community
6. Fishing
7. Recreation opportunities
8. Whittier Community School

Whittier's most often overlooked assets:

1. Trails/hiking opportunities
2. Winter recreation
3. Affordable housing
4. History (Alaska State History & Whittier History)
5. Security / safety

Please note: assets included in the above lists were separately contributed to the poll at least three times and are listed in order according to frequency of appearance. Neither of the above lists reflects a complete listing of assets identified during community meeting polling.

Alongside asset identification, community members contributed ideas for community-based opportunities they would like to see shape the future of Whittier. Opportunities were developed by small groups working together throughout the room and then presented to the entire group meeting at large (Table 16). After considering all identified opportunities, meeting participants voted on the top three opportunity areas they supported and believed could offer the greatest impact on the community.

Three opportunity areas emerged with the most meeting participant support:

- City Beautification
- Head of the Bay
- Whittier Visitors Center

Following the results of participant voting and based on individual interest, meeting participants self-sorted between three groups with each group representing one of the top three identified opportunity areas. Each of these new groups then turned its focus to linking together earlier identified assets to further deepen and develop their selected opportunity area.

Whittier Opportunity Areas – Supplied by Community Members	Votes
City Beautification - clean up boats and equipment, enforce lease provisions, enhance visitor experience and community engagement	11
Head of the Bay - plan to expand tax base and recreational opportunities, add launch ramps to open opportunities for development on railroad land	8
Whittier Visitors Center - coordinate programs such as excursions and Portage shuttle, coordinate with USCG Auxiliary to use the caboose as a Visitor Center	6
Positive tunnel experience - welcoming recreation users and residents	4
Parks and Playgrounds - for youth, community, and visitors	4
Capture/maximize current harbor revenue	4
Maintain unique character of Whittier	3
Develop Emerald Cove - Improve general access from cove to the sound	2
Creation of a Community Youth Center	2
Acquisition of Non-Essential Railroad Land	2
Enhance Railroad crossing	1
Improve & expand trail system - marking and conditions	1
Brewery & Distillery utilizing Whittier’s award-winning water	1
Total	49

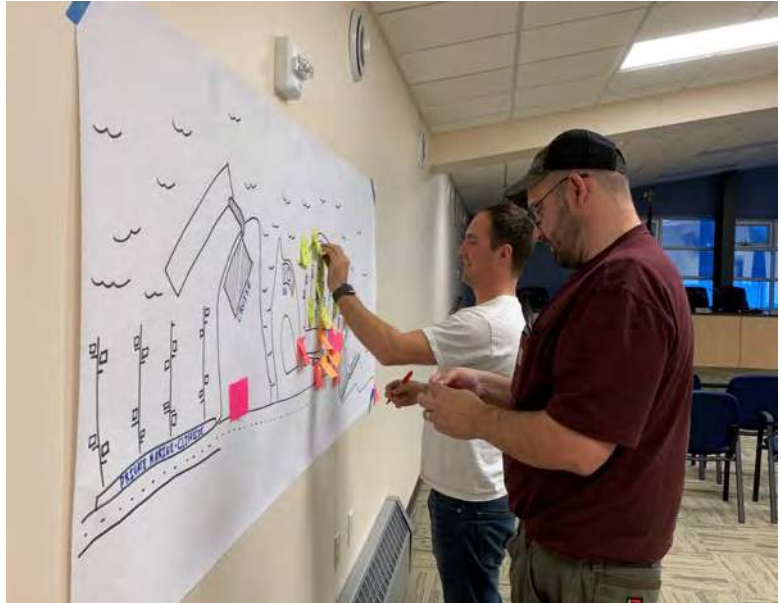
Table 16: Whittier Opportunities - Community Visioning Meeting ⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Whittier Community Visioning Meeting Poll Data, May 15, 2019

Community Work Groups

Community work groups formed to further develop plans and visions for the top three opportunity areas identified during the May 15, 2019 community visioning meeting. Those groups were for the Head of the Bay, Tourism and Beautification, and Harbor District.

While the original three identified opportunities were the Head of the Bay, Tourism, and Beautification, the Harbor District was added to capture needs expressed by stakeholders and the Comprehensive Plan Core Team and to ensure that the completed Comprehensive Plan captured a balanced plan for development and growth.



Work groups further identified goals, objectives, and actions for the City of Whittier’s 2020 Action Plan found in Chapter 13 of this document. Work group members were identified and invited to participate by a work group lead and represented a broad range of opinions and ideas from across the community. Work group meetings remained open to the public, and the action plan developed from the work groups was open for public comment before inclusion in the 2020 Comprehensive Plan.

Following the conclusion of a series of work group meetings through summer and fall of 2019 the final Action Plan was compiled. Due to some similarity of action items between the three groups, some items were consolidated into single actions. The final version of the 2020 Comprehensive Plan Action Plan was expanded to include a total of five focus areas to meet all needs identified by working group members. The final focus areas are: Tourism, Beautification, Harbor District, Head of the Bay, and Business Development. The Action Plan is shown in Chapter 13.



Photo 25: Public Comment on Draft Action Plan

Public Review and Comment

An open house was held at the Begich Towers on October 30, 2019, to share and review the Action Plan with community members. More than 20 people attended and provided feedback and input, which were incorporated into the action plan details.

The draft 2020 Comprehensive Plan was presented to City Council and the Planning and Zoning Commission in November 2019, where initial feedback and comments were received. Outreach to inform residents about the draft plan and encourage public comment was conducted from Nov. 15 - Dec. 15, 2019. Comments were considered and incorporated in the final draft which was submitted to the City of Whittier in January 2020 for approval.

Chapter 13: Action Plan - Community Goals, Objectives, and Implementation Recommendations

Chapter 13 provides a narrative to accompany the detailed Action Plan found at the end of this chapter.

The 2020 Comprehensive Plan Action Plan should guide the City of Whittier over the next five years. The Action Plan is designed to be used as part of an iterative review process that promotes focus on desired outcomes while maintaining flexibility and proactively engaging with change and development across the community.

The five distinct focus areas identified by Whittier stakeholders led to the development of eight goals to guide the City's role in the development of Whittier from 2020 – 2025. Each focus area offers details on specific objectives and actions/recommendations to promote the completion of the goals. Goals, objectives, and actions/recommendations are ordered by priority levels determined directly by community members during the October 30, 2019, action plan public comment open house in Whittier.

2020 Comprehensive Plan Implementation Recommendations

For the 2020 Action Plan to actively guide the City's role in Whittier's future development, the Action Plan must be implemented, reviewed, and updated at regular intervals. Implementation should be a community effort and community-driven process with individuals championing each initiative.

To implement the Action Plan:

- City Council should actively and deliberately direct the implementation of each focus area's goals and objectives while working towards completion of short-term, mid-term, and long-term outcomes.
- City Council and the Planning Commission should proactively communicate at regular intervals regarding Action Plan review and implementation.
- Planning Commission should design realistic and attainable timelines and designate local champions for each Action Plan objective.
- City Council should direct the Planning Commission to regularly (at least once per annual quarter) review and update Action Plan implementation progress making any necessary adjustments to Action Plan objectives and specific action items. To facilitate the review and revision process, City Council can utilize Strategic Doing™-inspired assessment methodology:
 - What have we accomplished since the last Action Plan review?
 - Based on what we have done (or what we have *not* done), what have we learned since the past review period?
 - How can what we've learned be applied to what we do between now and the next review period? What will change as a result of the new information/perspective we have now that we didn't have during the last Action Plan review?

- What will we do to move Action Plan implementation forward during the next quarter?
- City Council should review the 2020 Comprehensive Plan implementation progress during the first quarter each year from 2020 – 2025, informed by the Planning Commission’s quarterly reviews.
- Throughout the five-year implementation timeframe, and based on recommended methodology, the Action Plan focus areas, goals, objectives, and actions/recommendations will naturally evolve with additions and changes as needed.

2020 Comprehensive Plan Action Plan implementation should begin immediately upon comprehensive plan final approval during the first quarter of 2020.

Action Plan Narrative

For a complete version of this Action Plan with all attached actions and recommendations in addition to the outline of goals and objectives listed below, please see the end of this chapter.

Focus Area 1: Tourism

Goal 1: Create a Whittier Visitors Center to promote tourism within Whittier and retain visitors.

Objective 1: Develop a plan for a Visitors Center that includes location options (either recommendations for use of existing location(s) or recommendations for a new building, its cost, and physical building plan, if needed).

Objective 2: Support the development and execution of a marketing plan.

Objective 3: Create an inner-city shuttle system for easier transportation around Whittier for both visitors and residents.

Goal 2: Improve overall visitor experience.

Objective 1: Improve existing signage and create more non-regulatory / historical / informational signage for Whittier visitors.

Objective 2: Create photo opportunities for visitors.

Objective 3: Create an app / audio app / QR codes for visitors to highlight trails and attractions.

Goal 3: Create recreational opportunities within Whittier that will increase tourism and attract both visitors and residents.

Objective 1: Develop a new kayak launch within Whittier.

Objective 2: New and improved playgrounds for children's recreation.

Objective 3: Develop new trails; highlight and maintain existing trails and parks.

Objective 4: Develop additional recreational and tour opportunities throughout Whittier to enhance experience for visitors and residents alike.

Objective 5: Increase winter recreation opportunities.

Objective 6: Capture revenue from recreational tourists.

Objective 7: Create additional camping options including tent camping with fire pits.

Focus Area 2: Beautification

Goal 1: Improve the visual and sensory appeal of the Whittier experience, aligning with Whittier's vision as the gateway to the wonders of Prince William Sound.

Objective 1: Develop a public waste management plan to address litter, dog waste, recycling, and additional garbage cans.

Objective 2: Implement projects to enhance and improve visual and sensory appeal for residents and visitors.

Objective 3: Clean up boats, equipment, tires, etc. on City and private lands.

Goal 2: Improve enforcement of Whittier Code provisions and/or lease provisions to ensure regulations are uniform across the city.

Objective 1: Better communication from the Planning and Zoning Commission to community members.

Objective 2: Work to enforce current lease agreements, City rules, and City regulations.

Focus Area 3: Harbor District

Goal 1: Establish new Harbor infrastructure to modernize the Harbor District and increase safety.

Objective 1: Improve walkability of the Harbor District for resident appreciation, enhanced visitor experience, and access to shops / other attractions.

Objective 2: Improve access and quality of existing Harbor amenities and expand services.

Objective 3: Improve safety features within the Harbor District.

Objective 4: New infrastructure projects.

On the next two pages, you will find two draft Harbor District renderings. (Figure 14) outlines potential sign placement across the Harbor District. Proposed signage addresses both traffic and wayfinding needs. Figure 15 provides an example of an artistic design motif that could fit into a greater signage or community design theme.

Figure 14: Conceptual Signage Placement in Harbor District Rendering



Figure 15: Sample Signage Harbor District Rendering



Focus Area 4: Head of the Bay

Goal 1: Using the vision for the Head of the Bay, pursue fiscally sustainable development opportunities of industry, recreational opportunities, and businesses to create a Head of the Bay area that meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.

Objective 1: Continue to develop recreational opportunities at the Head of the Bay to attract visitors, increase quality of life for residents, and meet Whittier’s vision to "preserve our unspoiled environment, while improving amenities for all those who live and visit here" and "provide first-rate facilities."

Objective 2: Support industry development at the Head of the Bay to create economic growth and support future business development in Whittier.

Objective 3: Restore Shakespeare Creek area and provide access for visitors and residents.

On the next page, Figure 16 details a conceptual layout for the Head of the Bay as devised by community members during comprehensive plan work group meetings. The proposed vision presents a multi-use Head of the Bay area inclusive of industrial, commercial, and recreational uses.

Figure 16: Head of the Bay Draft Rendering



Focus Area 5: Business Development

Goal 1: Increase opportunity for business retention and new business development within Whittier.

Objective 1: Increase land opportunities for new business development.

Objective 2: Increase clarity of City codes and enforcement.

Objective 3: Work to attract new businesses and develop existing businesses.

Ongoing / Future Projects

Some important and ongoing City projects are not included in the Action Plan portion of this comprehensive plan. Ongoing projects that continue to be a priority for the City of Whittier in the long term include:

- Buckner Building environmental remediation
- Engineering and construction at Whittier Creek levy and Depot Road to mitigate flooding issues
- Phase V engineering and construction at Shotgun Cove Road
- Design and engineering of the Head of the Bay harbor project
- Whittier Harbor updates
- Whittier Museum/Community Center feasibility and implementation

In 2018, the City of Whittier and the Army Corps of Engineers developed the *Draft Integrated Feasibility Report and Environmental Assessment and Draft Finding of No Significant Impact for the Development of a Recreational Boat Launch at the Head of the Bay*. At this time, the City has selected Alternative A-6 from the plan, a four-lane boat ramp design.

Detailed Action Plan with Recommendations

The following pages provide the complete version of the 2020 Whittier Comprehensive Plan, Action Plan with all attached actions and recommendations in addition to the goals and objectives listed above.

1. TOURISM			
Focus Areas & Goals <i>Actionable goals that communicate the "What" & "Why"</i>	Objectives <i>Measurable objectives, which combined accomplish the larger goal</i>	Actions / Recommendations <i>Specific actions or recommendations that provide steps or important guidance for completing the objective</i>	Item #
1. Create a Whittier Visitors Bureau / Welcome Center to promote tourism within Whittier and retain visitors.	1. Develop a plan for a Visitors/Welcome Center that includes location options, recommendations for use of existing location or new build, cost, and physical building plan if needed.	1. Develop and approve proposal for Visitors/Welcome Center building. Suggested locations are near the waterfront, cruise terminal, Whittier Coast Guard Auxiliary caboose, or a location that meets the needs of the visitors.	1.1.1.1
		2. Identify and secure funding for Visitors/Welcome Center. Partner with businesses.	1.1.1.2
		3. Obtain land for Center, private or public, depending on funding source.	1.1.1.3
		4. Hire a 5-month employee, paid position. Recommended that the Whittier Chamber of Commerce oversees position and City partially funds.	1.1.1.4
	2. Support the development and execution of a marketing plan.	1. City to support a Chamber-of-Commerce-led effort to develop a statewide and national marketing plan to promote tourism with appropriate branding and theme.	1.1.2.1
		2. City to work with Chamber to ensure marketing information is on City website.	1.1.2.2
		3. Identify state and national tourism bureaus and publications in which to advertise.	1.1.2.3
		4. Create and run marketing campaign to retain visitors in Whittier longer: "Catch the next tunnel, spend another hour in Whittier."	1.1.2.4
	3. Create an inner-city shuttle system for easier transportation around Whittier for both visitors and residents.	1. Explore feasibility of inner-city shuttle.	1.1.3.1
		2. Explore community shuttle models that would be relevant for Whittier, e.g. Girdwood and Skagway.	1.1.3.2
		3. Recommended shuttle route to include a loop from the harbor district to Barnett parking lot and Head of the Bay.	1.1.3.3
2. Improve overall visitor experience.	1. Improve existing signage and create more non-regulatory / historical / informational signage for Whittier visitors.	1. Improved signage on restroom facilities, parking pay kiosks, and campground.	1.2.1.1
		2. Develop over-arching format and artistic theme for non-regulatory, informational signage. Incorporate multiple languages.	1.2.1.2
		3. Install signage around Smitty's Cove to highlight underwater Marine Park.	1.2.1.3
		4. Create walking tour of Whittier with signage; recommended Prince William Sound Museum take the lead.	1.2.1.4
	2. Create photo opportunities for visitors.	1. Repair existing or create new "Whittier" sign in the harbor for visitors and residents to take photos with their fish/catch. Encourage sharing on social media to help generate interest in the city.	1.2.2.1
		2. Create archway/landmark for entrance to Small Boat Harbor.	1.2.2.2
		3. Add wood face cutouts in harbor district for visitor photo opportunities.	1.2.2.3
		4. Develop Whittier's own "Landmark art" that fits with marketing theme (Goal 1.1.2.1).	1.2.2.4
	3. Create an app / audio app / QR codes for visitors to highlight trails and attractions.	1. Develop informational app for visitors. Partner with businesses.	1.2.3.1
		2. Integrate app with Whittier walking tour (Goal 1.2.1.4).	1.2.3.2

1. TOURISM - Continued			
Focus Areas & Goals	Objectives	Actions / Recommendations	Item #
Measurable goals that communicate the "what" & "why"	Measurable objectives, which combined accomplish the longer goal	Specific actions or recommendations that provide steps or important guidance for completing the objective	
3. Create recreational opportunities within Whittier that will increase tourism and attract both visitors and residents.	1. Develop a new kayak launch within Whittier.	1. Identify location to develop new commercial and recreational kayak launch.	1.3.1.1
		2. Design kayak launch.	1.3.1.2
		3. Secure funding for development of kayak launch.	1.3.1.3
		4. Build new kayak launch.	1.3.1.4
	2. New and improved playgrounds for children's recreation.	1. Improve school playground. Partner with school district.	1.3.2.1
		2. Create an outdoor soccer field.	1.3.2.2
		3. Improve basketball court.	1.3.2.3
		4. Improve utilization of mid-town park by adding covered spaces, fire pits, and picnic tables.	1.3.2.4
	3. Develop new trails; highlight and maintain existing trails and parks.	1. Work with Chugach National Forest to create a Land Use Plan to ensure that future development of trails is complementary to existing trails and creates a network of trails in the Passage Canal and Portage area.	1.3.3.1
		2. Continue to build and maintain trails. Specific trails include: Emerald Cove, Horsetail Falls, and Portage Pass.	1.3.3.2
		3. Work to clean trails and keep free of debris.	1.3.3.3
		1. Encourage local businesses and Whittier Chamber of Commerce to create excursions and tour opportunities for cruise ships passengers and independent visitors.	1.3.4.1
	4. Develop additional recreational and tour opportunities throughout Whittier to enhance experience for visitors and residents alike.	2. Work with USFS, AK DOT&PF, and Princess to determine feasibility of scheduling to optimize visitor retention, e.g. Glacier cruise ships could come in at the top of the hour so the visitors have an hour to spend in Whittier.	1.3.4.2
		3. Support the creation of special events such as fun runs, 5k runs, concerts, and festivals.	1.3.4.3
		4. Support a bike rental or bike sharing program in Whittier.	1.3.4.4
		1. Market existing winter recreational opportunities.	1.3.5.1
	5. Increase winter recreation opportunities.	2. Work with State of Alaska DOT&PF to ensure ease of access through tunnel for visitors with snow machines.	1.3.5.2
		3. Capture revenue to maintain ski trails.	1.3.5.3
		4. Explore feasibility of purchasing a groomer for cross-country ski trails in the winter.	1.3.5.4
		1. Explore and identify opportunities for increased revenue from recreational users, e.g. parking fees.	1.3.6.1
	6. Capture revenue from recreational tourists.	1. Identify locations for additional camping options within Whittier, e.g. Head of the Bay (Goal 5.1.1.3).	1.3.7.1
		2. Explore opportunities for kayak and small vessel access in Shot Gun Cove for designated tent camping locations and rental cabins.	1.3.7.2
		3. Develop partnerships with Alaska State Parks to build and maintain facilities.	1.3.7.3

2. BEAUTIFICATION			
Focus Areas & Goals <i>Actionable goals that communicate the "what" & "why"</i>	Objectives <i>Measurable objectives, which combined accomplish the larger goal</i>	Actions / Recommendations <i>Specific actions or recommendations that provide steps or important guidance for completing the objective</i>	Item #
1. Improve the visual and sensory appeal of the Whittier experience, aligning with Whittier's vision as the gateway to the wonders of the Prince William Sound.	1. Develop a public waste management plan to address litter, dog waste, recycling, and additional garbage cans.	1. Add garbage cans at trailheads.	2.1.1.1
		2. Provide dog-waste bags close to trash cans around town and at trailheads.	2.1.1.2
		3. Develop a Whittier recycling program. Could include a transfer station within Whittier to make recycling easier for community members.	2.1.1.3
	2. Implement projects to enhance and improve visual and sensory appeal for residents and visitors.	1. City-sponsored items such as hanging flower baskets.	2.1.2.1
		2. One big planting effort - specific community service project.	2.1.2.2
		3. Beautify garbage cans around Whittier in collaboration with different artists.	2.1.2.3
	3. Clean up boats, equipment, tires, etc. on City and private lands.	1. Work with the Whittier Chamber of Commerce, Whittier Community School, local businesses, land holders, and ARRC to have a "City Cleanup Day" to remove derelict boats, tires, equipment, etc.	2.1.3.1
		2. Clean up City-owned land.	2.1.3.2
		3. Create incentives for private land/leaseholders to participate in beautification and clean-up efforts.	2.1.3.3
2. Improve enforcement of Whittier Code provisions and/or lease provisions to ensure regulations are uniform across the city.	1. Better communication from the Planning and Zoning Commission to community members.	1. Create a guide for all city planning and projects that is clearly visible and accessible to the entire community; request transparency in planning and execution of projects.	2.2.1.1
		2. Communication with existing and potential slip owners to understand and reduce the confusion about enforcement and penalties for noncompliance.	2.2.1.2
		3. Create informational material to improve communications and understanding of rules and regulations such as trash and appearance. Ensure information is available online and in-person at harbor.	2.2.1.3
	2. Work to enforce current lease agreements, City rules, and City regulations.	1. Recommendation for architectural covenants.	2.2.2.1
		3. Recommendation for Planning and Zoning Commission to pass an ordinance to enforce fresh paint on buildings and other standards for beautification.	2.2.2.2

3. HARBOR DISTRICT			
Focus Areas & Goals	Objectives	Actions / Recommendations	Item #
1. Establish new harbor infrastructure to modernize the harbor district and increase safety.	Measurable objectives, which combined accomplish the larger goal	<i>Specific actions or recommendations that provide steps or important guidance for completing the objective</i>	
	1. Improve walkability of the Harbor District for resident appreciation, enhanced visitor experience, and access to shops / other attractions.	1. Repair the grid platform in the small boat harbor.	3.1.1.1
		2. Explore feasibility and opportunity of creating a walk along the existing seawall in the Small Boat Harbor.	3.1.1.2
	2. Improve access and quality of existing harbor amenities and expand services.	1. Modernize parking registration and payment system for harbor.	3.1.2.1
		2. Install a coin operated shower for visitors and boat owners.	3.1.2.2
		3. Public Safety to train harbor officials on writing tickets for vehicles in violation.	3.1.2.3
		4. Install a giant dumpster with sliding doors and a satellite transfer system.	3.1.2.4
		5. Improve east boat ramp.	3.1.2.5
	3. Improve safety features within harbor district.	1. Install new harbor lights.	3.1.3.1
		2. Work with the Coast Guard to install new navigation lights.	3.1.3.2
		3. Seasonal employee dedicated to traffic control in congested areas, e.g. near ferry dock and triangle area.	3.1.3.3
	4. New infrastructure projects.	1. Build a covered fish cleaning station.	3.1.4.1
		2. Build an oil and sewage disposal station for boats.	3.1.4.2
		3. Explore the opportunities to add seagull deterrents to Small Boat Harbor	3.1.4.3
		4. Create bad weather alternatives such as covered shelters and pavilions in strategic locations throughout the harbor.	3.1.4.4
		5. Build a new ADEC /EPA compliant wash-down and sewage dump station for boats.	3.1.4.5
		6. Explore the opportunities to add second harbor entrance and access ramp.	3.1.4.6

4. HEAD OF THE BAY			
Focus Areas & Goals <i>Actionable goals that communicate the "what" & "why."</i>	Objectives <i>Measurable objectives, which combined accomplish the larger goal</i>	Actions / Recommendations <i>Specific actions or recommendations that provide steps or important guidance for completing the objective</i>	Item #
1. Using the vision for the Head of the Bay, pursue fiscally sustainable development opportunities of industry, recreational opportunities, and businesses to create a Head of the Bay area that meets the needs of residents, businesses, and visitors.	1. Continue to develop recreational opportunities at the Head of the Bay to attract visitors, increase quality of life for residents, and meet Whittier's vision to "preserve our unspoiled environment, while improving amenities for all those who live and visit here" and "provide first-rate facilities".	1. Continue planning and development of the breakwater at Head of the Bay.	4.1.1.1
		2. Develop plan for 4-lane boat launch, including kayak launch. Recommended that financial sustainability be considered in plan.	4.1.1.2
		3. Develop camping opportunities at Head of the Bay.	4.1.1.3
		4. Develop trails and hiking opportunities and Head of the Bay.	4.1.1.4
	2. Support Industry Development at Head of the Bay to create economic growth and support future businesses development in Whittier.	1. Acquire old tank farm land and support business development opportunities within area, e.g. dry-stack boat storage and boat repair/manufacturing.	4.1.2.1
		2. Pursue planning and long-term development of an ice-free, deep-water port at Head of the Bay.	4.1.2.2
		1. Develop plans for streambank remediation and restoration.	4.1.3.1
	3. Restore Shakespeare Creek area and provide access for visitors and residents.	2. Develop plans for parking, trails, and visitor access to area, including linking area to campground.	4.1.3.2
		3. Develop plans for fish-viewing platform at Shakespeare Creek.	4.1.3.3
5. BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT			
1. Increase opportunity for business retention and new business development within Whittier.	1. Increase land opportunities for new business development.	1. Research acquisition of non-essential ARRC lands.	5.1.1.1
		2. Work with the ARRC To free up land for business use.	5.1.1.2
	2. Increase clarity of City codes and enforcement.	1. Planning and Zoning Commission to work with businesses to find solutions to their current issues and help businesses come into compliance with code.	5.1.2.1
		2. Create guide for new businesses starting in Whittier.	5.1.2.2
		3. Make leases uniform to ensure ease in enforcement and business understanding.	5.1.2.3
		1. Attract businesses which desire to invest in Whittier.	5.1.3.1
	3. Work to attract new businesses and develop existing businesses.	2. Engage business owners to become actively involved year-round.	5.1.3.2
		3. Create a cohesive effort to develop the cruise ship industry.	5.1.3.3

Appendices

Appendix A: Acknowledgments

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Appendix B: Acronyms

AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ACS	Alaska Communications
ACS	American Community Survey
ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
AML	Alaska Marine Line, LLC
AMHS	Alaska Marine Highway System
ARRC	Alaska Railroad Corporation
AMSC	Area Maritime Security Committee
CEDS	Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy
CSD	Chugach School District
CI/KR	Maritime Critical Infrastructure and Key Resources
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
GCI	General Communication Inc.
GSA	General Services Administration
kV	kilovolt
kW	kilowatt
MARSEC	Maritime Security
MTS	Maritime Transportation System
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
PTBT	Passenger Transportation Business Tax
PWS	Prince William Sound
REAA	Rural Educational Attendance Area
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USCG	United States Coast Guard
UUI	United Utilities, Inc.
WAMS	Whittier Area Maritime Security

Appendix C: List of Figures, Tables, Exhibits, and Photos

Figures

Figure 1: Location Map	9
Figure 2: Whittier City Limits	10
Figure 3: Road Map of Whittier	35
Figure 4: Proposed Shotgun Cove Road Extension	36
Figure 5: Canadian National Railway Shipping Route	41
Figure 6: Whittier Harbor Boat Slip Map	45
Figure 7: Map of Land Ownership in Whittier	48
Figure 8: Whittier Core Area Land Ownership.....	49
Figure 9: Map of Land Use	50
Figure 10: Whittier Core Area Future Land Use/Zoning Map.....	54
Figure 11: Conceptual Land Parcels for Shotgun Cove Road.....	55
Figure 12: Map of Existing Zoning for Core Area	57
Figure 13: Map of Shotgun Cove Land Ownership	72
Figure 14: Conceptual Signage Placement in Harbor District Rendering	85
Figure 15: Sample Signage Harbor District Rendering.....	86
Figure 16: Head of the Bay Draft Rendering.....	88

Tables

Table 1: Number of Housing Units in Whittier	17
Table 2: Housing Data	17
Table 3: Governmental Funds: Revenues, Expenditures, and Fund Balances (2018)	26
Table 4: Enterprise Fund: Revenues, Expenditures, and Ending Fund Balance (2011-2018)	29
Table 5: Monthly Vehicle Count (2012-2019)	33
Table 6: Freight and Railroad Passenger Traffic at the Port of Whittier (2010-2017)	38
Table 7: AMHS Passenger Traffic in Whittier (2010-2015)	43
Table 8: Whittier Small Boat Harbor Slip Waitlist.....	44

Table 9: Variation in Slip Size at Small Boat Harbor by Float.....	45
Table 10: Economic Indicator Comparison	62
Table 11: Whittier Employment by Industry	63
Table 12: City of Whittier Employment (2019)	64
Table 13: Whittier School Employment (2019)	64
Table 14: Saltwater Fishing in Prince William Sound (2014)	66
Table 15: Charter / Guide Fishing Comparison.....	66
Table 16: Whittier Opportunities - Community Visioning Meeting	79

Exhibits

Exhibit 1: Average Temperature (1942-2011)	12
Exhibit 2: Average Snowfall and Precipitation (1942-2011)	12
Exhibit 3: Population Age in Whittier (2010)	14
Exhibit 4: Whittier Historic Population (1950-2010)	15
Exhibit 5: Governmental Funds: Revenues, Expenditures, and Funds Balances (2011-2018)	27
Exhibit 6: Cruise Ship Tax Special Revenue Fund (2011-2018)	28
Exhibit 7: Enterprise Fund Operating Revenues and Expenses (2011-2018)	30
Exhibit 8: Monthly Vehicle Count (2012-2019)	34
Exhibit 9: Rail Freight Traffic compared to Passengers at the Port of Whittier (2010-2015)	39
Exhibit 10: Cruise Ship Calls in Whittier (2007-2019)	42
Exhibit 11: Visitors via cruise ships in Whittier (2007-2016)	42

Photos

Photo 1: Whittier Core Area	13
Photo 2: Begich Towers	17
Photo 3: Whittier Manor	18
Photo 4: Buckner Building.....	18
Photo 5: Arial View of the Harbor District and Rail Yard	21
Photo 6: Begich Towers and Whittier School	22
Photo 7: Lu Young Park in Whittier.....	23
Photo 8: Prince William Sound Museum Located at the Anchor Inn	24
Photo 9: View Across Passage Canal from Lou Young Park.....	37
Photo 10: ARRC Rail Yard in Whittier.....	39
Photo 11: Rail Yard and Dock Area	40
Photo 12: Cruise Ship at the Deep-water Cruise Ship Dock	41
Photo 13: Ferry Dock and Terminal	43
Photo 14: Small Boat Harbor	44
Photo 15: Cruise ship dock and Cliffside Marina	46
Photo 16: Creekside Campground	52
Photo 17: Triangle Area	59
Photo 18: Businesses in the Harbor District	65
Photo 19:The Inn at Whittier	66
Photo 20: Charter Services in Whittier	67
Photo 21: Small Boat Harbor	68
Photo 22: Cove Creek.....	69
Photo 23: Whittier Community Visioning Meeting	77
Photo 24: Harbor District Working Group Meeting.....	80
Photo 25: Public Comment on Draft Action Plan	80

Appendix D:

2012: Comprehensive Plan Goal / Policy / Action Scorecard

Transportation		
Description		Red/Yellow/Green
Goal 1 Expand and improve access into and transportation facilities within Whittier.		
Policy 1.1 Improve the Small Boat Harbor and water access to Whittier.		
Action 1.1.1	Establish the Port of Whittier Harbor Development Project, including the reconstruction and expansion of the existing small boat harbor and construction of a new harbor at the head of Passage Canal, as Whittier's top priority project.	
Action 1.1.2	Work with state and federal funding agencies and elected officials, the Denali Commission, and private sources to obtain funds to design and construct the Port of Whittier Harbor Project and development of the head of Passage Canal uplands.	
Action 1.1.3	Pursue expanded and improved Alaska Marine Highway (AMHS) service to Whittier.	
Action 1.1.4	Improve navigation in Passage Canal.	
Policy 1.2 Improve circulation of vehicles within Whittier's core area and road access to Anchorage, other areas of the state, and outlying areas of the community.		
Action 1.2.1	Make access available to lands in Shotgun Cove critical for the community's economic development through completion of the Shotgun Cove Road project.	
Action 1.2.2	Submit local road projects to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.	
Action 1.2.3	Explore the possibility of the RS2477 route over Portage Pass.	
Action 1.2.4	Continue to seek funding to complete a road toward Decision Point State Marine Park.	
Action 1.2.5	Provide shuttle service within Whittier.	
Action 1.2.6	Provide shuttle service between Portage and Whittier.	
Policy 1.3 Improve pedestrian circulation within Whittier's core area.		
Action 1.3.1	Improve pedestrian crossing at Whittier Creek.	
Action 1.3.2	Integrate ADA compliant pedestrian trails and/or sidewalks with ongoing highway improvements.	
Policy 1.4 Provide adequate and convenient residential and transient parking.		
Action 1.4.1	Develop a multi-level parking facility that could also serve as boat storage in the off-season.	
Action 1.4.2	Construct paved parking lots.	
Policy 1.5 Develop plans for improved transportation within Whittier.		
Action 1.5.1	Develop a circulation plan to improve access to, and safe circulation within, the core area, to include needs of both vehicles and pedestrians.	
Action 1.5.2	Develop a parking plan with recommendations for walkway, street crossing, and beach access as well as shared parking where feasible.	
Policy 1.6 Expand vehicular tunnel access to Whittier.		

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Action 1.6.1	Improve tunnel access into Whittier by increasing the hours of operations in both summer and winter.	
Action 1.6.2	Promote the construction of a new tunnel facility.	
Policy 1.7 Pursue continued and improved air access to Whittier.		
Action 1.7.1	Coordinate with the State of Alaska and the FAA to secure funding for improved airport facilities and infrastructure.	
Action 1.7.2	Promote the design and construction of a helicopter pad to serve the Whittier community.	
Policy 1.8 Improve quality of road system for sustainability.		
Action 1.8.1	Institute a program to rebuild the roads to appropriate standards.	
Action 1.8.2	Develop programs to pave gravel streets and reduce erosion areas.	
<div>Facilities</div> <div>Description</div> <div>Red/Yellow/Green</div>		
Goal 2 Expand and improve facilities to meet current and future needs in Whittier.		
Policy 2.1 Improve public buildings and services.		
Action 2.1.1	Design, seek funding for, and construct new harbor office – part of the Port of Whittier Harbor Development Project – in the Harbor District.	
Action 2.1.2	Research funding opportunities to repair or replace the public works facility.	
Action 2.1.3	Pursue funding for a central City Services building to house all city services which may include but be not limited to public safety; fire and EMS; city, state and federal administrative facilities; library; health and recreational facilities.	
Action 2.1.4	Provide modern, maintained public restrooms and shower facilities.	
Action 2.1.5	Establish a major maintenance and repair fund and a major equipment fund for replacement of public works equipment when necessary.	
Policy 2.2 Improve the quality and availability of emergency medical services in Whittier.		
Action 2.2.1	Provide in the City budget for financial support for emergency medical services and physician sponsorship of EMS.	
Action 2.2.2	Continue to expand and upgrade the existing Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) program, including the addition of an EMT III or Paramedic to support community health care. Work to qualify as many residents as possible for these positions.	
Action 2.2.3	Document and publicize the importance of Whittier as an emergency medical center for western Prince William Sound.	
Action 2.2.4	Support the efforts of agencies responding to waterborne emergencies.	
Policy 2.3 Encourages State and Federal agencies and private sector vendors to enhance and expand access to scheduled health and social services for Whittier residents and visitors.		
Action 2.3.1	Create favorable conditions to encourage agencies and vendors to provide scheduled specialized health and social services in Whittier.	
Action 2.3.2	Encourage retrofitting historical buildings for ADA compliance.	
Policy 2.4 Provide safe and adequate public facilities and utilities to support existing needs, seasonal population fluctuation, and community growth.		
Action 2.4.1	Provide municipal lands for public school facility needs and reserve a site for a public school in the Shotgun Cove/Emerald Cove Subdivision.	
Action 2.4.2	Repair and expand the existing sewer and water systems as needed.	
Action 2.4.3	Explore effective sewer and water system alternatives in areas of the municipality where connection to the central system is not practicable.	
Action 2.4.4	Develop and implement a storm drain management plan.	
Action 2.4.5	Explore and encourage the use of alternative energy sources.	

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Action 2.4.6	Research solid waste alternatives and develop and implement a solid waste management plan.	
Action 2.4.7	Encourage additional internet/cable providers to serve Whittier's residents.	
Municipal Government		
Description		Red/Yellow/Green
Goal 3	The municipal government will serve its citizens through a strategy of responsible stewardship of its environmental, economic and human resources.	
Policy 3.1	Expand the local government corporate boundary.	
Action 3.1.1	The City will seek to annex areas that are planned for sale or development by the state and are deemed by the City to be beneficial to its economic development.	
Policy 3.2	Improve relations between city government and businesses for the economic and social welfare of the community.	
Action 3.2.1	Develop a strategy to foster a team/cooperative spirit between city officials, business owners and the public.	
Policy 3.3	Research methods to generate revenue other than taxes to pay for services and facilities.	
Action 3.3.1	Pursue bonds, local improvement districts, grants and Capital Improvement Program projects.	
Action 3.3.2	Attend statewide meetings to stay involved with other agencies.	
Action 3.3.3	Examine alternative means of service delivery, such as privatization of services and contracting existing city services.	
Policy 3.4	Protect and enhance the natural features, environment, and scenic beauty of the areas around Whittier.	
Action 3.4.1	Encourage consideration of and compliance with Whittier Comprehensive Plan, Hazards Mitigation Plan, Coastal Zone Management Plan, and subdivision and zoning ordinances.	
Action 3.4.2	Coordinate with state and federal agencies for environmental protection and permitting.	
Action 3.4.3	Develop a checklist of agencies and resources to provide guidance for responsible development.	
Policy 3.5	Coordinate hazard mitigation and response in Whittier.	
Action 3.5.1	Train local personnel and provide equipment in Whittier to control and respond to life threatening industrial accidents.	
Action 3.5.2	Develop a schedule to review update and practice an emergency evacuation plan for Whittier.	
Action 3.5.3	Work with industrial users and transporters of hazardous materials to develop an improved public awareness of existing capabilities to respond to emergency situations.	
Action 3.5.4	Develop a plan to deal with potential hazards such as fire, earthquake, flood, hazardous material spills, etc.	
Action 3.5.5	Develop web-based GIS and provide for public viewing of security cameras throughout the community.	
Action 3.5.6	Repair levee above Whittier Core Area.	
Action 3.5.7	Review and update Hazard Mitigation Plan according to schedule.	
Policy 3.6	Support recreational opportunities by providing local governmental assistance.	
Action 3.6.1	Develop a land use plan for parks and trails.	
Action 3.6.2	Provide support for agencies and groups for pass through grants.	
Action 3.6.3	Review and upgrade the recreational area map and designate use areas.	
Action 3.6.4	Establish a volunteer and community work service program to provide recreational enhancement labor.	
Land Use		
Description		Red/Yellow/Green

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Goal 4 Guide the Use of Land in a Manner that Provides for Orderly and Efficient Community Growth.		
Policy 4.1 Develop a land use plan for the head of Passage Canal		
Action 4.1.1	Pursue grant funding for economic development planning, programming, and feasibility.	
Action 4.1.2	Work with stakeholders to produce a complete land use plan for development of small boat harbor, residential, open space/recreational, commercial, industrial, conservation, and/or enhancement areas.	
Policy 4.2 Update the core area land use plan.		
Action 4.2.1	Determine the appropriate land use for properties in the core area.	
Action 4.2.2	Identify City-owned properties and designate uses in a City Land Use Plan.	
Policy 4.3 Develop a land use plan for Shotgun Cove.		
Action 4.3.1	Pursue economic development grant funding for economic development feasibility study.	
Action 4.3.2	Prepare an economic development feasibility study for Shotgun Cove development.	
Action 4.3.3	Zone available areas for land development.	
Action 4.3.4	Finish Phase II & III of Shotgun Cove Road to facilitate future growth in the area.	
Policy 4.4 Ensure that the public has access to designated public use land and beach areas.		
Action 4.4.1	Plat rights of way and easements to the water.	
Action 4.4.2	Designate and provide ADA compliant access to areas for public use.	
Action 4.4.3	Designate potential recreational sites in the Passage Canal area.	
Policy 4.5 Provide land for use by the private sector.		
Action 4.5.1	Coordinate with state and federal agencies to facilitate the construction of affordable residences.	
Action 4.5.2	Encourage the State Department of Natural Resources to dispose of State lands in Passage Canal that are suitable for private development.	
Action 4.5.3	The City will offer residential, commercial and industrial land with covenants that require development for the intended use within a specified timeframe.	
Action 4.5.4	Explore opportunities to acquire publicly held lands for development by City of Whittier or for private development.	
Policy 4.6 Develop a strategy for the tank farm.		
Action 4.6.1	Acquire the tank farm property.	
Action 4.6.2	Develop a land use plan for the tank farm property.	
Policy 4.7 Ensure land use practices are consistent with responsible watershed management.		
Action 4.7.1	Develop a watershed study.	
Recreation		
Description		Red/Yellow/Green
Goal 5 Create recreational opportunities and activities for residents and visitors.		
Policy 5.1 Increase recreational facilities for residents and visitors of all ages.		
Action 5.1.1	Improve Whittier's trail system using but not limited to the following means: * Work with relevant state and federal agencies to identify and sign hiking trails in Whittier; * Improve trailhead and kayak launching facilities at the end of the second segment of the Shotgun Cove Road project; * Improve Lu Young Park recreational facilities; * Create more hiking, skiing, snowboarding, and snow machine trails; and * Connect existing trails.	
Action 5.1.2	Work to provide increased marine recreational facilities and activities including but not limited to the following: * Establish a kayak launch area and ramp; * Designate fishing areas for non-boaters	

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Action 5.1.3	Seek funding for and construct an indoor recreation facility and adjoining park area to include but not be limited to the following facilities: * Community swimming pool; * Sports and recreation facility * Ice skating rink:	
Action 5.1.4	Set aside areas to provide for recreation use.	
Action 5.1.5	Work with state and federal agencies to assist in constructing the Shotgun Cove small boat harbor	
Action 5.1.6	Promote Whittier as a shore-based recreational center for hiking, camping, berry picking and sightseeing.	
Action 5.1.7	Encourage the development of camping and day-use facilities.	
Action 5.1.8	Pursue funding to design and construct a youth center for Whittier residents.	
Action 5.1.9	Promote winter activities in the Whittier area.	
Policy 5.2 Promote regional recreational events and competitions.		
Action 5.2.1	Coordinate with various groups to encourage events in Whittier.	
Action 5.2.2	Encourage guided walking tours and facilities for self guided tours.	
Appearance		
Description		Red/Yellow/Green
Goal 6 Capitalize on Whittier's Natural Beauty and Visual Appeal.		
Policy 6.1 Encourage coordinated clean up and enhancement projects.		
Action 6.1.1	Develop and implement a plan to require new construction to include beautification elements.	
Action 6.1.2	Enhance downtown boardwalk system, especially along the waterfront.	
Action 6.1.3	Install interpretive and informational signs to enhance visitors' experience in Whittier.	
Action 6.1.4	Promote annual community clean-up kick-off days and on-going clean-up efforts.	
Action 6.1.5	Create architectural standards.	
Action 6.1.6	Continue to pursue a solution to derelict structures such as the Buckner Building and USFS Building (near Anchor Inn) .	
Policy 6.2 Research grants for art and other aesthetic improvement projects.		
Action 6.2.1	Provide support to agencies and groups for pass through grants.	
Action 6.2.2	Research and apply for grants.	
Action 6.2.3	Research incentive programs for landscaping and beautification projects.	
Action 6.2.4	Encourage recycling efforts throughout the community	
Economy		
Description		Red/Yellow/Green
Goal 7 Create Economic Opportunities for Residents and Businesses throughout the Whittier community.		
Policy 7.1 Establish a strategy for local hire.		
Action 7.1.1	Promote the utilization of local residents to the maximum extent possible for local jobs.	
Policy 7.2 Capitalize on the economic potential of increased tourism.		
Action 7.2.1	Create a tourist information center.	
Action 7.2.2	Promote growth of small business tourist industry.	
Action 7.2.3	Foster a friendly and inviting attitude towards visitors.	
Policy 7.3 Research strategies for attracting new commercial developments.		

City of Whittier – 2020 Comprehensive Plan

Action 7.3.1	Work with the private sector in attracting more businesses to Whittier.	
Action 7.3.2	Pursue obtaining economic development grants from the state and federal governments.	
Action 7.3.3	Ensure that there are adequate land use areas for commercial and economic development.	
Policy 7.4 Maintain and encourage expanding Whittier's use as a major marine center for Southcentral Alaska.		
Action 7.4.1	Encourage expansion of Whittier's economy based on commercial fishing, marine industrial and tourism/recreation activities.	
Action 7.4.2	Construct new harbor facilities at Shotgun Cove.	
Policy 7.5 Maintain and encourage developing Whittier as a deep-water port.		
Action 7.5.1	Support the continuation of a fuel and product storage and transshipment depot in Whittier.	
Action 7.5.2	Research the feasibility of and, if feasible, support the development of natural gas liquefaction at the Head of Passage Canal.	
Policy 7.6 Encourage expansion of commercial business and service industry development in Whittier.		
Action 7.6.1	Support and encourage renovation of existing structures for commercial businesses, warehouses, and fish processing in the Whittier core area.	
Action 7.6.2	Attract commercial development that serves local community needs.	
Action 7.6.3	Pursue grant funding for infrastructure development, such as utilities, transportation/access improvements, recreational and other public facilities.	