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Appendix E. Stakeholder Engagement Report

The team engaged key internal and external stakeholders to gather feedback on current processes and future growth opportunities. Stakeholders provided insights into their interactions with the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) and offered suggestions for addressing existing challenges, potential future developments, and opportunities for collaboration.

E.1. Key Challenges

Several challenges were highlighted during the discussions with stakeholders, the most pressing being the congestion and logistical constraints at the terminal. The following issues were raised:

- *Waterfront Access Constraints:* With waterfront property at a premium, businesses like water taxis and kayaking operators are losing public access points. Stakeholders stressed the importance of maintaining beach access and preserving space for both commercial and recreational use along the waterfront.
- *Safety and Accessibility:* The area near the Alaska Marine Highway Ferry terminal is a pinch point, especially during peak tourist seasons, with high pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Improved infrastructure, such as pedestrian crossings and clear wayfinding signage, was recommended to ensure residents' and visitors' safety and ease of movement.

E.2. Growth Needs and Opportunities

Stakeholders strongly desire growth and economic development for cruise and freight traffic, particularly considering it is a year-round, ice-free port and Whittier's growing role as the gateway to Prince William Sound.

- *Infrastructure Expansion and Modernization:* Much of the terminal's infrastructure, dating back to World War II, requires significant upgrades to ensure safe and efficient operations. Stakeholders emphasized the need for updated wharf facilities and transfer span, and the replacement of deteriorating bulkheads to support growing freight and passenger traffic. These upgrades will not only improve operational efficiency but also ensure long-term sustainability.
- *Coordination Across Agencies:* Improved coordination between ARRC, the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (Alaska DOT&PF), cruise lines, and local businesses is critical to optimizing traffic flow and ensuring operational efficiency. Synchronizing tunnel, train, and ship schedules could reduce congestion and make Whittier more accessible for freight and tourists. Stakeholders also suggested creating a priority tunnel lane for residents to help minimize traffic disruptions.
- *Expansion of Cruise and Freight Operations:* The expected growth in cruise traffic, particularly with the development of a new dock at the Head of the Bay, presents both opportunities and challenges. More cruise ships will bring increased economic activity

and pressure on the existing rail and road infrastructure. Increasing rail capacity for passenger trains and ensuring better scheduling of both freight and passenger services will be essential to accommodate this growth.

E.3. Collaboration for Future Growth

Stakeholders highlighted several opportunities to improve the terminal's operations and support future growth through collaboration:

- *Partnership for Waterfront Access:* Ensuring continued access to the waterfront for commercial and recreational purposes was identified as critical. Stakeholders recommended closer collaboration between local businesses, ARRC, and Alaska DOT&PF to create solutions that benefit all parties.
- *Resiliency and Emergency Preparedness:* Natural hazards like tsunamis require comprehensive emergency plans. Stakeholders emphasized including detailed emergency response protocols and hazard mitigation strategies in the Whittier Terminal Master Plan to enhance Whittier's resiliency.

The stakeholder engagement process provided valuable insights into the challenges, growth needs, and opportunities for the Whittier Terminal. By addressing these concerns and identifying opportunities for collaboration, the Master Plan can help guide the terminal's development into a more efficient, resilient, and sustainable facility that supports economic growth and meets the needs of all stakeholders.

E.4. Documentation

The following is the combined documentation from stakeholder engagement activities for this project.



Whittier Terminal Master Plan

Public Involvement Summary

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1. Whittier Terminal Master Plan Vision

To renew the Whittier Terminal as an efficient, resilient, and balanced facility that safely delivers customer needs and empowers economic growth for the benefit of the State.

2. Introduction

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) operates more than 650 miles of main and branch lines in Alaska and connects communities year-round through its freight and passenger service, including freight and passenger services from its approximately 260-acre terminal reserve property in Whittier, Alaska. Constructed more than 60 years ago, much of the terminal facility is approaching the end of its useful life. The ARRC has initiated a master plan process to identify and implement updates for its Whittier facilities to address future anticipated demand.

In 2021, the ARRC received a federal grant under U.S. Maritime Administration's (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) to develop a "comprehensive master plan that evaluates the condition, performance, safety, efficiency, state of good repair, reliability, resiliency, and sustainability of the Whittier Terminal." This Whittier Terminal Master Plan (WTMP) effort seeks to identify areas for potential rehabilitation of its marine, terminal, and upland infrastructure, as well as potential operational improvements to support the Whittier terminal.

3. Public Involvement Purpose and Goals

ARRC recognizes the public and other stakeholders want to be involved in decisions that could potentially affect them. ARRC also recognizes it is responsible for the safe and effective operations of its rail and waterfront infrastructure. The purpose of the WTMP's public involvement activities is to keep people informed about the WTMP project and provide opportunities for stakeholders to share ideas, concerns, and opportunities related to the master plan. The goals of this effort are to:

1. Inform the public on why the project is needed and ARRC's proposed plan of action,
2. Provide opportunities for public input on terminal access, use, and community needs, and
3. Share how public input was used during project design.

3.1. WTMP Stakeholders

Stakeholders are people interested in or affected—directly or indirectly—by the WTMP project and eventual implementation. By consulting and involving stakeholder groups at key phases of project development, the WTMP project team identified opportunities and responded to issues of concern as they arose.

To support its outreach endeavors, the WTMP project team developed a public involvement plan early in the planning process, which guided outreach strategies and activities to inform and involve WTMP stakeholders at each phase of the WTMP's development. Identified stakeholders included internal stakeholders—primarily ARRC operations staff—and external stakeholders who represented organizations, businesses, elected officials, and community residents.

3.2. Outreach Activities

Stakeholder engagement is a systematic process designed to provide clear and consistent information and engage stakeholders at key phases of project development.¹

The following distinct overlapping objectives guided ARRC's engagement process:

- **Inform** stakeholders about the project, decision-making structure, and development process.
- **Consult** stakeholders to obtain input on alternatives.
- **Involve** key internal and external stakeholders meaningfully in data collection and alternatives development.

To meet these objectives, tools and strategies were tailored to each of the WTMP's key development phases: visioning, data collection, alternatives development, and draft plan review.

3.2.1. Internal Stakeholder Meetings

Visioning – July 13, 2023

A visioning session to launch the planning process and commence conversations about the WTMP's vision statement was held on July 13, 2023, and attended by 13 ARRC internal stakeholders. This session served as the context for all planning elements. The WTMP project team shared the objective statement from the MARAD grant, focusing on the terminal's condition, performance, safety, efficiency, state of good repair, reliability, resiliency, and sustainability.

The group's brainstorming sessions identified the desired themes of efficiency, partnership, alignment, and renewal. After reviewing potential, pre-drafted vision statements, the group proposed the following as the plan's working vision statement:

To renew the Whittier Terminal as an efficient, resilient, and balanced facility that safely delivers customer needs and empowers economic growth for the railroad.²

¹ The outreach outlined in the Public Involvement Plan draws from the [International Association for Public Participation](#) (IAP2) public involvement spectrum¹.

² The working vision statement was later amended to remove "for the railroad" and replace it with "for the benefit of the State."

Information Gathering – August 28, 2023

Internal stakeholders gathered on August 28, 2023, to continue conversations on the Whittier Terminal's needs and desired future state. Eleven ARRC employees—representing engineering, external affairs, real estate, project management, mechanical, and transportation services—were led through a facilitated conversation on current strengths of the terminal, what should be improved, and far-reaching desired improvements.

While the current terminal makes efficient use of its small footprint and lease area, the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel (Tunnel) is a constraint for staging, passenger, and freight operations. The meeting participants and shareholders desired areas for additional staging and expanded track length with the ultimate goal of more space for all operators, more room for cargo storage and loading, area(s) for snow storage, and longer trains. Reconstruction of the marginal wharf was proposed to ease waterfront congestion.

Alternative 1 Review – March 18, 2024

The WTMP project's technical team met with ARRC project management and engineering representatives on March 18, 2024, to review the initial concept (Alternative 1). The group discussed operational and infrastructure needs for a proposed new wharf, environmental influences such as tide levels and water depth, operational needs including span lengths and staging areas, pedestrian and access needs, likely tourism growth, and road safety and security. Based on the group's input, the project team made additional refinements to the water side and land side designs and anticipated costs.

[illegible]

The WTMP project's technical team met with internal stakeholders on September 30, 2024, to review and collect feedback on the plan's proposed waterfront reconstruction and track design concepts. The materials highlighted Alternative 2 and other proposals to reconstruct the waterfront facilities in their existing locations and reconfigure uplands infrastructure to maximize operational efficiency. The meeting focused on technical and operational needs, and participants identified potential fatal flaws in the designs. As a result of the meeting, ARRC determined that there was sufficient internal support to move forward with Alternative 2 and seek additional input from external stakeholders while continuing to refine the alternatives internally.

The WTMP project's track design technical team met with internal stakeholders on February 25, 2025, to review ARRC's comments on the draft WTMP. The discussion focused primarily on track layouts, truck routes within the terminal including a revised gate entrance configuration, and passenger boarding area modifications. As a result of ARRC's feedback, the WTMP project team generated a new track layout (Option D) and updated the draft WTMP in preparation for public review.

3.2.2. Presentations

City Council – November 21, 2023

The WTMP project team gave a brief presentation to the Whittier City Council on November 21, 2023, to introduce the planning process and the need for the plan update, share the draft vision statement, and talk about the external stakeholder meeting planned in Whittier on December 7, 2023. Based on feedback from this presentation, ARRC subsequently updated maps of the terminal reserve to clarify ARRC's operational versus non-operational areas.

Planning and Zoning Commission – February 15, 2024

Much of the City of Whittier (the City) is zoned for industrial use, and the City was in the process of working on code and land use updates. ARRC sought to learn more about the community's long-range planning efforts and attended a Planning and Zoning (P&Z) Commission work session on February 15, 2024. The meeting, attended by five P&Z commissioners and 10 members of the public, provided an opportunity for participants to share comments and ideas related to transportation so the WTMP project team could understand and reflect on the City's efforts.

Much of the evening's conversation focused on the at-grade road/rail crossing. This particular area is a pinch point for vehicular, pedestrian, and rail traffic. The WTMP project team shared a preliminary concept for a grade-separated overpass, and participants provided suggestions on emergency access, locations for pedestrian crossings, snow storage, and parking access. As a result of this feedback, the WTMP project team refined the grade-separated crossing location and footprint to reduce visual and right-of-way impacts.

[illegible]

The WTMP project team provided an update to the Whittier City Council at its regularly scheduled session on October 15, 2024, which included updates on what ARRC had heard from internal and external stakeholders and how that information was reflected in the preliminary draft concepts. Key features included opportunities to optimize waterfront and rail operations within the existing operational footprints, moving the grade separated crossing further west to maintain existing parking facilities, adding pedestrian facilities, and adding track to improve train staging and reduce trains blocking the current at-grade crossing. As a result of comments posed at the meeting, the WTMP project team refined snow removal and storage plans.

The WTMP project team provided an update to City Council on March 18, 2025, to share information on the upcoming 30-day public comment period on the draft WTMP and public open house scheduled for April 15, 2025, at Whittier City Council Chambers. The WTMP project team clarified that Delong Dock and the Head of the Bay were not included in the study area and explained how ARRC was sharing baseline data from the WTMP with Alaska DOT&PF and the City to support their recently launched community transportation plan. Council members were encouraged to help share the public open house information with others within the community.

A final presentation to the City Council is planned for mid-July 2025 prior to the final plan's submittal to MARAD for approval and eventual implementation.

See Appendix A for presentation materials.

3.2.3. Key External Stakeholder Meetings

External Stakeholder Meeting – December 7, 2023

The ARRC hosted a virtual and in-person meeting on December 7, 2023, to introduce the WTMP and seek input on current processes and potential future needs based on the plans of key operational stakeholders. Thirty-two individuals representing the WTMP project team, ARRC staff, and external stakeholders (ranging from city officials to local business owners), participated in the event.

In preparation to the meeting, invitees were sent the following questions:

- 1) How did ARRC support their operations, or were there factors limiting business development or operations that should be changed?
- 2) Were there anticipated short- or long-term changes in their business operations that ARRC should be aware of or that could be impacted by changes at the ARRC Whittier Terminal?

The facilitated conversation ranged from transportation challenges generally (e.g., tunnel schedule) to the community's emergency response needs. Key issues were later incorporated into the draft WTMP, including the need for:

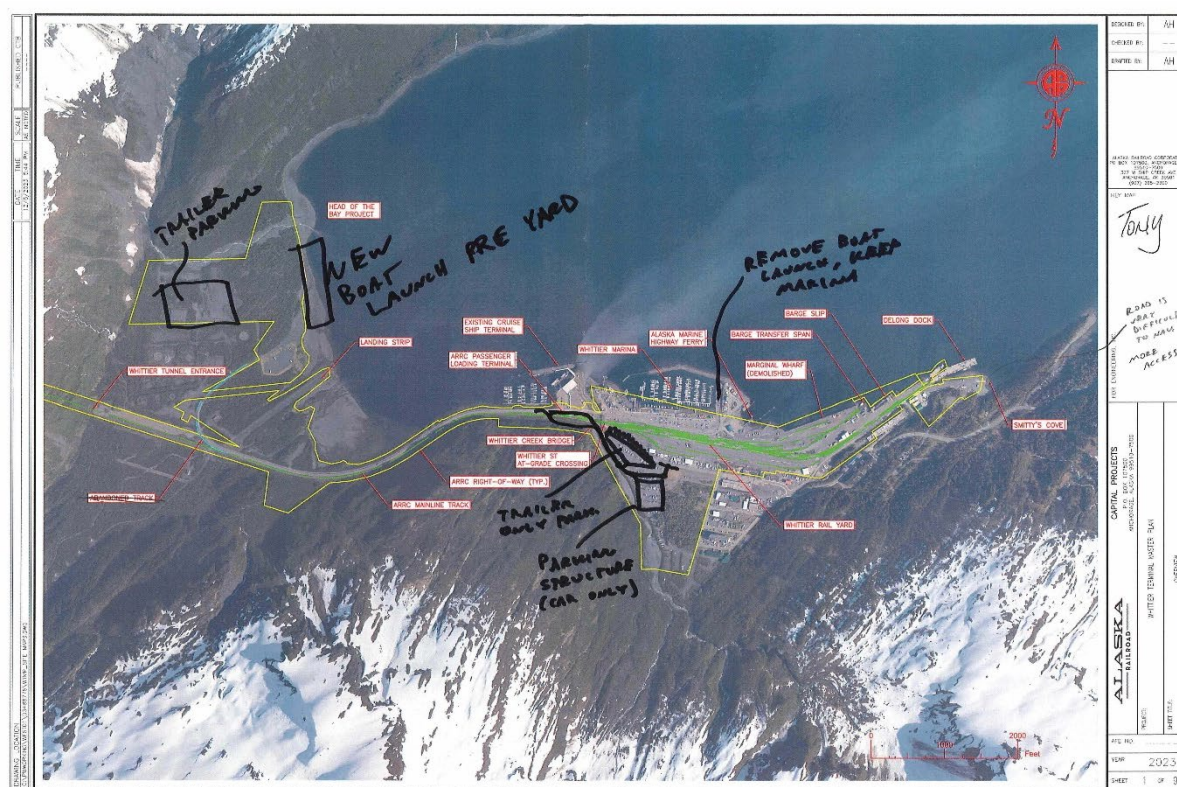
- Continued water access for local businesses;
- Pedestrian safety improvements;
- Parking access;
- Ways to reduce trains blocking the at-grade road crossing, and
- Emergency access to upland areas in case of tsunami.

Cruise visitation will also continue to grow, increasing the need for train and motorcoach transportation.

Meeting participants agreed "capacity" was the overriding issue, although not everything was in ARRC's ability to control such as the city's desire for growth, increasing visitation, tunnel operations, and parking.

Ideas and action items non-specific to ARRC operations were subsequently shared with Alaska DOT&PF, the City, and other agencies working on Whittier's community-wide transportation plan.

Figure 3. Map with Stakeholder Comments from December 17, 2023, External Stakeholder Meeting



Alaska Marine Lines (AML) Stakeholder Meeting – March 21, 2025

The WTMP project's technical and economics teams met with Alaska Marine Lines (AML) and ARRC internal stakeholders to discuss the revised draft WTMP submitted to ARRC on March 11, 2025. The meeting focused on two primary goals:

1. Identify an accurate “no-build” scenario for the benefit cost analysis (BCA) for replacement of the transfer span and barge berthing facility.
2. Review proposed track configurations presented in Option D of the draft WTMP with respect to AML operations within the terminal.

Based on feedback from AML, the team updated the BCA no-build scenario and made additional modifications to the track layout (Option E).

See Appendix B for external stakeholder meeting materials.

3.2.4. Public Meetings

Open House – April 15, 2025

The draft WTMP was posted on ARRC’s website on April 1, 2025, for a 30-day public comment period.

An informal public open house was held mid-way through the public comment period on April 15, 2025, from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m. with a brief presentation at 5:00 p.m. 23 individuals attended, including members of the public, City employees, and business owners. Attendees had the opportunity to see information about the WTMP’s purpose and need, goals, and detailed alternatives for land-side and maritime improvements. Subject matter experts were on hand to respond to individual questions before and after the presentation, which shared similar information in more detail.

The meeting was advertised via postcards sent to all ARRC leaseholders and all P.O. Box holders in Whittier; posted on flyers at the City Hall, small boat harbor, Begich Towers East and West, Whittier Manor, Anchor Inn restaurant and store; via the City’s Facebook page; and through a display ad in the *Anchorage Daily News*.

See Appendix C for open house and advertising materials.

Figure 4. WTMP Public Open House Presentation, April 15, 2025



4. Summary of Comments

While comments on the planning effort were welcomed at any time, the official comment period for the draft WTMP was held April 1 through April 30, 2025. A total of 5 written comments were submitted by comment form or email.

See Appendix D for comments received.



Appendix A Presentations



CITY OF WHITTIER

Gateway to Western Prince William Sound
PO Box 608 | Whittier, Alaska 99693 | 907.472.2327

November 21, 2023

Regular Meeting

7:00 p.m.

Council Chamber

Dave Dickason

Mayor

Term Expires 2025

Peter Denmark

Vice Mayor

Term Expires 2026

Victor Shen

Council Member

Term Expires 2024

Tom Wagner

Council Member

Term Expires 2025

Daniel Blair

Council Member

Term Expires 2025

David Pinguoch

Council Member

Term Expires 2026

Renner Macaltau

Council Member

Term Expires 2024

Jackie C. Wilde

Acting City Manager

Shelby Carlson

City Clerk

Holly Wells

City Attorney

Jessica Spuhler

City Attorney

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. OPENING CEREMONY

3. ROLL CALL

4. CITIZEN COMMENTS ON ANY AGENDA ITEM EXCEPT THOSE ITEMS SCHEDULED FOR PUBLIC HEARING *Those who have signed in will be given the first opportunity to speak on any agenda item except those scheduled for Public Hearing. Time is limited to two (2) minutes per speaker and thirty (30) minutes total time for this agenda item.*

5. APPROVAL OF AGENDA AND CONSENT AGENDA *Approval of Consent Agenda passes all routine items indicated by asterisk (*). Consent Agenda items are not considered separately unless a council member requests. In the event of such a request, the item is returned to the Regular Agenda.*

6. CONFLICT OF INTEREST *Immediately after the Council approves the agenda at a regular or special meeting, each Council member shall declare any financial interest in a matter appearing on the agenda. Any Council member or member of the public present at the meeting may question whether another Council member has a financial interest in a matter appearing on the agenda.*

7. PRESENTATIONS AND REPORTS

A. Presentations

i. Mark Hager – Years of Service Award

ii. Alaska Railroad Corporation Whittier Terminal Master Plan

iii. Good Cannabis, LLC

B. Mayor's Report

C. Vice Mayor's Report

D. City Manager Report – *City Manager's Report includes, among other things, the Finance Director Report and the Water/Wastewater Manager Report*

8. PUBLIC HEARINGS

A. ORDINANCE 2023-005 Amending WMC Title 2, Administration and Personnel, to Enact Whittier Municipal Code Chapter 2.56 Establishing the Ad Hoc "City Lands Advisory Committee," its Authority, and its Composition

B. NON-CODE ORDINANCE 2023-006 Consenting to the Assignment of the Lease Agreement for a Portion of Lot 9 and All of Lot 10 of the Whittier Triangle Business Area from Robert Michael Walette and Jana Deann Walette, Doing Business As Oceanfront Café, LLC, to Cathy Taylor, Doing Business As Whittier Oceanfront Café, LLC and Authorizing the Acting City Manager to Execute Consent Documents

C. NON-CODE ORDINANCE 2023-007 Amending the Whittier Fee Schedule for 2024 to Increase Certain Harbor Rates and Charges by 4.0% and Add Administrative Rates and Charges

D. NON-CODE ORDINANCE 2023-008 Approving the 2024 Operating Budget and Related Revenues, Expenditures/Expenses and Interfund Transfers, and Amending the Pay Scale, and Appropriating Funds

9. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. ORDINANCES FOR INTRODUCTION

- i. **ORDINANCE 2023-009** Repealing Whittier Municipal Code Title 12 Entitled “Streets, Harbors and Public Places” and Reenacting WMC Title 12 Entitled “Port and Harbor” to Update the City of Whittier’s Provisions Governing Conduct in the Port of Whittier and the Use of Port Facilities

B. RESOLUTIONS

- i. ***RESOLUTION 2023-038** Adopting an Alternative Allocation Method for the FY24 Shared Fisheries Business Tax Program and Certifying that this Allocation Method Fairly Represents the Distribution of Significant Effects of Fisheries Business Activity in Fisheries Management Area 15 - Prince William Sound
- ii. ***RESOLUTION 2023-039** Directing the City Clerk to Destroy City Records Past Their Retention Schedule and Purchase Industrial Shredder
- iii. ***RESOLUTION 2023-040** Supporting Full Funding (\$7,644,677) for the State of Alaska Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program in the FY 2025 State Capital Budget
- iv. **RESOLUTION 2023-041** Authorizing the Acting City Manager to Enter into a Sole Source Professional Services Agreement with Jermain Dunnagan & Owens, PC (“JDO”) to Serve as Bond Counsel for the City’s Series 2024 Harbor Revenue Bond Issue, and to Pay Fees in an Amount not to Exceed \$35,000, and Appropriating Funds
- v. **RESOLUTION 2023-042** Adopting a New Organizational Chart Reflecting the Current Organization of Whittier’s City Government
- vi. ***RESOLUTION 2023-043** Adopting a Temporary Order of Business until the Approval of the New Council Policy & Procedures Manual
- vii. ***RESOLUTION 2023-044** Establishing the City of Whittier’s Calendar Year 2024 City Legislative Priorities
- viii. ***RESOLUTION 2023-045** Establishing the City of Whittier’s Calendar Year 2024 State Legislative Priorities
- ix. ***RESOLUTION 2023-046** Establishing the City of Whittier’s Calendar Year 2024 Federal Legislative Priorities

C. OTHER NEW BUSINESS

- i. *Approval of the October 10, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes
- ii. *Approval of the October 17, 2023, Special Meeting Minutes
- iii. *Approval of the October 17, 2023, Regular Meeting Minutes
- iv. Discuss Scheduling of the Council & Commission Training

10. **INFORMATIONAL ITEMS AND REPORTS** *(No Action Required)*

- A. September 2023 City Financial Reports *Please see City Council packet which contains monthly Financial Statements*
- B. Parks and Recreation Committee Meeting Minutes – October 16, 2023
- C. Port and Harbor Advisory Commission Meeting Minutes – October 5, 2023
- D. Planning and Zoning Commission Report – November 21, 2023
- E. State of Alaska Lobbyist Report – November 21, 2023
- F. Established Committees
- G. Holiday Card Contest Finalists

11. **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

12. **CITIZEN DISCUSSION** *Those signed in will be given the first opportunity to speak on any subject over which the Council has control. Time is limited to five (5) minutes per speaker.*

13. **COUNCIL AND ADMINISTRATION RESPONSE TO CITIZEN COMMENTS**

14. **ADJOURNMENT**



Whittier Terminal Master Plan Update

*Elizabeth Greer, Program Manager Marine Facilities,
Alaska Railroad Corporation
Whittier City Council Meeting, November 21, 2023*



AlaskaRailroad.com

➤ Alaska Railroad's Whittier Terminal



- Approximately 260-acre property.
- Rail port opened in 1944; military freight line turned over to Alaska Railroad in 1960.
- Terminal includes a barge slip, uplands container handling/storage area, rail yard, and support facilities.
- Updates needed for continued safe and efficient operations.

➤ A Critical Gateway



- A principal ARRC container terminal.
- Sole ARRC connection to North American rail system.
- Significant source of ARRC freight revenue.
- Supports faster, easier, and less expensive freight transportation to Railbelt communities.

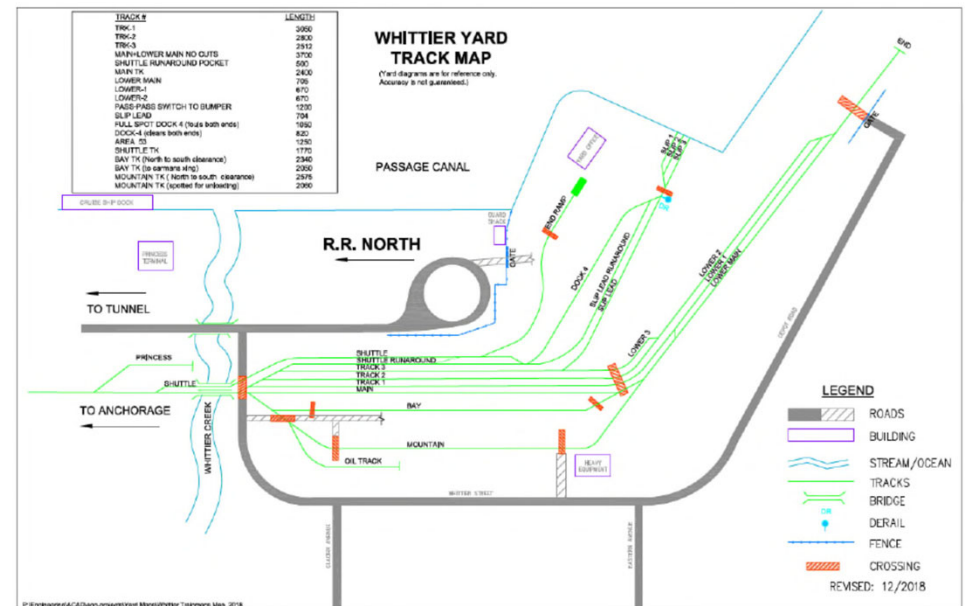
➤ Master Plan Update



- Funding: Port Infrastructure Development Program grant.
- Charge: develop a “comprehensive master plan that evaluates the condition, performance, safety, efficiency, state of good repair, reliability, resiliency, and sustainability of the Whittier Terminal.”

Problems to be Solved

- Rail yard is constrained by a crossing at the only public road to downtown Whittier.
- Working and staging areas are cramped.
- Shared track for passenger and freight traffic.
- Security and access.
- Aging marine facilities.
- Inefficient movement of intermodal freight.
- Increased tunnel traffic (including anticipated increase in cruise ship bus traffic).
- Portage Tunnel clearance.




➤ Opportunities

- Incorporate changing technology
- Address road crossing conflicts
- Redesign cargo storage container staging areas
- Increase track length
- Redevelop uplands
- Replace marine facilities
- Identify new passenger facilities
- Increase dock space
- Create defined perimeter

➤ Proposed Master Plan Vision (Draft)

To renew the Whittier Terminal as an efficient, resilient, and balanced facility that safely delivers community and customer needs and empowers economic growth for the railroad.

➤ Master Plan Elements

- 
- A photograph of a worker wearing an orange safety helmet and a high-visibility orange and yellow safety vest. The worker is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right, and appears to be working on a large, rusted metal structure. The structure has vertical panels and horizontal beams, with significant rust and debris visible. The background is dark and textured, suggesting an industrial or construction environment.
- Current Conditions
 - Future Needs
 - Transportation Study
 - Waterfront Reconstruction Study
 - Design Concepts
 - Improvement Prioritization Plan

> Schedule

Fall 2023	Data Collection Internal Stakeholder Meetings Key Partner Meeting Whittier City Council Updates Planning Commission Updates
Winter 2023/2024	Complete Studies Whittier City Council Updates Planning Commission Updates Small group meetings
Spring 2024	Develop Alternatives Draft Plan – Public Open House Whittier City Council Updates Planning Commission Updates
Summer 2024	Final Plan

➤ Get Involved

- Sign up for the project mailing list at [\(link\)](#).
- Email thoughts and ideas to info@whittierterminalmpu.com.
- Participate in the Public Open House next spring.

THANK YOU

