

# **Appendix B:**

## **Excerpts from the 2012 Whittier Comprehensive Plan Update**





City of Whittier

# Whittier Comprehensive Plan Update

2012

Submitted by:



Adopted April 17, 2012





# **Whittier**

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# **Comprehensive Plan Update 2012**

*Submitted to:*

**City of Whittier**

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*And the*

**Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission**

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*Accepted by City Council Resolution*

*On April 17, 2012*

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***Whittier Comprehensive Plan Update***

## Table of Contents

Chapter One: Introduction .....	1
Purpose of the plan .....	1
Contents of the plan .....	2
Public involvement .....	2
Vision statement.....	2
Chapter Two: Background information .....	3
Whittier's natural setting .....	3
Location.....	3
Geology .....	3
Topography .....	6
Marine environment .....	6
Climate .....	6
Flora and soils.....	8
Fish and game .....	8
The people of Whittier .....	8
Population .....	8
Chapter Three: Infrastructure.....	11
Housing .....	11
Housing demand.....	14
City-owned facilities.....	14
City administration .....	15
City Council .....	15
Planning and Zoning Commission .....	15
Port and Harbor Commission.....	15
Municipal revenues and expenses .....	16
Municipal services .....	18
Public safety.....	18
Public Works .....	19
Health.....	19
Recreation.....	19
Education .....	20
Educational Awards .....	21
Other Facilities .....	22
Museum .....	22
Library .....	22
Nondenominational Church .....	23

City-Provided Utilities .....	23
Water.....	23
Sewer .....	23
Future Needs .....	24
Public and private utility services .....	24
Electric power supply .....	24
Telephone, Internet and cable television .....	25
Solid waste services .....	25
Natural gas.....	25
Future Needs .....	25
Chapter Four: Transportation.....	27
Land Transportation .....	27
Railroad.....	27
Roads.....	28
Road System in Whittier .....	31
Pedestrian/Bicycle System .....	35
Trails .....	35
Marine Transportation .....	36
Small Boat Harbor.....	36
Private Marina .....	37
Ferry System.....	37
Rail Barge Dock .....	37
Cruise Ship Facilities .....	38
Airport.....	38
Chapter Five: Current and future economy.....	39
Current economic indicators .....	39
Whittier Businesses .....	40
Recreation and tourism.....	41
Commercial fishing fleet.....	44
Marine services .....	45
Government .....	45
General Commercial Services .....	45
Future economic development opportunities .....	46
Economic opportunities in Whittier's core area and at the head of Passage Canal.....	46
Chapter Six: Land ownership, use and management.....	49
Land ownership .....	49
Federal Government.....	49

ARRC/State of Alaska.....	49
City of Whittier.....	49
Chugach Alaska Corporation.....	49
Privately owned and leased lands .....	49
Existing land use .....	52
Industrial Use .....	52
Residential .....	52
Commercial.....	52
Public .....	52
Open Space/Recreational Uses .....	52
Vacant.....	54
Future land use .....	54
Future land use in the Whittier core area.....	54
Future Land Use at the Head of Passage Canal .....	54
Future Land Use in Emerald Cove and Shotgun Cove .....	56
Land use regulation.....	57
Zoning Ordinance .....	57
Cooperative Agreements .....	59
Municipal Land Disposal Program .....	59
Land Leases.....	59
Covenants .....	60
Chapter Seven: Security .....	61
Whittier Area Maritime Security.....	61
AMHS.....	61
ARRC .....	62
Cruise ship facility and adjacent marina .....	62
Future security needs.....	62
Airport.....	62
City facilities .....	63
Chapter Eight: Other plans and recommendations.....	65
City of Whittier, Alaska, Local Hazards Mitigation Plan, February 2008.....	65
Sustainable Economic Development for the Prince William Sound Region, September 2005 .....	65
Whittier Water System Master Plan, June 2005 .....	65
Forest Service Planning Projects .....	65
Chugach Forest Plan .....	66
Prince William Sound Human Use Study .....	66
Whittier Creek Watershed Council, 2004 .....	67



Alaska Railroad Master Plan for Whittier .....	67
State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.....	67
Prince Williams Sound Transportation Plan, July 2001 .....	67
Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, STIP, FY 2010 - 2013.....	68
Whittier Airport Master Plan, 2003 .....	68
City of Whittier Indirect Effects Planning Assistance Coordination and Implementation Planning – Final Short-term Critical Needs, 1998.....	69
City of Whittier Redevelopment and Urban Design Plan, 1994 .....	69
Alaska Coastal Management Program, 1988 .....	69
Chapter Nine: Community Goals, Policies and Actions .....	71
Transportation .....	72
Facilities.....	74
Municipal Government .....	76
Land Use .....	78
Recreation .....	80
Appearance .....	81
Economy .....	82

## Figures

Figure 1: Location Map .....	4
Figure 2: Whittier City Limits .....	5
Figure 3: Community Facilities.....	12
Figure 4: Functional Classifications .....	32
Figure 5: Whittier area land ownership .....	50
Figure 6: Whittier core area land ownership .....	51
Figure 7: Whittier current land use.....	53
Figure 8: Future land use/zoning map .....	55
Figure 9: Existing zoning .....	58

## Tables

Table 1: Average temperatures and precipitation – period of record: 10/02/1950 to 12/31/2010.....	7
Table 2: Housing data.....	11
Table 3: Number of units at each location.....	11
Table 4: Comparison of City of Whittier revenues, 2003 through 2010 .....	17
Table 5: Comparison of City of Whittier expenses, 2003 through 2010.....	17
Table 6: Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel Tolls, 2001 & 2011 .....	29
Table 7: Monthly Vehicle Count, shown every two years, 2000 to 2010 .....	30

Table 8: Whittier’s Current Road Classification and Standards*.....	31
Table 9: 2001 Traffic Counts for Whittier.....	32
Table 10: Comparison of economic indicators.....	39
Table 11: Occupations in Whittier .....	40
Table 12: Employment rates.....	40
Table 13: Whittier businesses.....	41
Table 14: Zoning Acreage Comparison.....	57

## **Exhibits**

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Exhibit 1: 2010 Age range of Whittier residents .....	9
Exhibit 2: Whittier historic population.....	10
Exhibit 3: 2010 revenues by category .....	16
Exhibit 4: Monthly Vehicle Count, 2000-2010 .....	30

## Acronyms

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AADT	Annual Average Daily Traffic
ADEC	Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
ADOT&PF	Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
AMHS	Alaska Marine Highway System
ARMS	Alaska Railroad Marine Services
ARRC	Alaska Railroad Corporation
AS	Alaska Statute
BTI	Begich Towers, Incorporated
CAC	Chugach Alaska Corporation
CIRI	Cook Inlet Region, Incorporated
CMP	Coastal Management Plan
CSD	Chugach School District
CY	Calendar Year
DCED	Department of Community and Economic Development
EMS	Emergency Medical Services
EMT	Emergency Medical Technician
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ETT	Emergency Trauma Technician
FAA	Federal Aviation Administration
FEIS	Final Environmental Impact Statement
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
FY	Fiscal Year
GPS	Global Positioning System
GSA	General Services Administration
HB	House Bill
INTRA	International Tourism and Resort Advisors
kV	kilovolt
kW	kilowatt
MARSEC	Maritime Security
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRCS	(USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service
PAPI	Precision Approach Path Indicator
POL	Petroleum, Oil, and Lubricants
PUD	Planned Unit Development
PWS	Prince William Sound
REAA	Rural Education Attendance Area
RIC	Rural Information Center
ROD	Record of Decision
RV	Recreational Vehicle
STIP	Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
USCG	United States Coast Guard
VASI	Visual Approach Slope Indicator
WAMS	Whittier Area Maritime Security

## Chapter One: Introduction

### Purpose of the plan

The previous Whittier Comprehensive Master Plan was completed in 2005. Since then, many changes have taken place in Whittier altering the community's infrastructure, economy and plans for the future. Some of the significant changes include:

- The hours of access through the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel have been extended, allowing greater access to the community.
- Plans that affect the Whittier community and vicinity were developed by the Railroad and Forest Service.
- The Watershed Council has been working to plan for all of Whittier's watersheds.
- Phases I and II of Shotgun Cove Road design are completed. Construction of the first segment of Phase I began in 2006.
- Demand for moorage in Whittier's small boat harbor increased.
- Alaska Marine Highway ferry service connects Whittier to Cordova and Valdez and other Prince William Sound communities on the Southcentral Alaska Route; while the Cross-Gulf Route connects Whittier and southcentral communities to Southeast Alaska.
- The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities may close the Whittier Airport. A new airport may be built at Emerald Cove.
- Improvements were made to cruise ship facilities and the railroad connection to Anchorage. Major cruise ships continue to dock in Whittier.
- New transmodal Alaska Marine Line (AML) Dock off-loading facilities were built.
- A marine park was developed at Smitty's Cove and at Shakespeare Creek.
- The first pre-formed artificial reef in Alaska was established in 2006, as a restoration tool for coastal waters.
- Land was designated at Shakespeare Creek to accommodate a viewing platform, fish spawning and a fishing lagoon.
- Several other infrastructure projects are in various stages of design and construction, or have been completed. These include expanded campground facilities, a marina, a large vessel dock, and additional parking.
- Planned Unit Development (PUD) is planned at the head of the bay.



*Cruise Terminal and the Inn at Whittier*

Because of these extensive changes, the City of Whittier recognized the need for a complete Comprehensive Plan Update to provide direction for the community's future development. Through this planning effort, the various entities within the community, including the residents, the City government, Chugach Alaska Corporation, locally active businesses and interested agencies, came together to establish common goals and strategies for their achievement.

The purpose of this plan is to update the 2005 plan by inventorying current conditions, analyzing issues and

Whittier include the convenience of living on the road system, the reasonable cost of purchasing a condominium and the low cost of living.

Purchase prices at the Begich Towers and Whittier Manor vary greatly depending upon the quality of renovations made to the unit and its location. Units in both buildings with a view of Passage Canal generally have higher resale values. Purchase prices for upscale, remodeled three-bedroom units in Begich Towers have run \$70,000 to \$75,000 in 2011. Basic one- to two-bedroom units, with original military construction have ranged in price from \$20,000 to \$30,000.<sup>5</sup>

Average assessed values have increased in recent years. Rental prices have also increased. Demand for rental units has increased, and it is difficult to find rental units during the summer months.

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

About 25 vacant lots in the area of Whittier are presently zoned for single-family residential development. The topography of the land and high costs of providing access, sewer and water, however, discouraged homebuilding. Most of the lots are less than one-half acre. Ownership of these lots has changed very little in the last few years. In September 2011, only one lot was available for purchase.

### Housing demand

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

While the number of existing housing units in Whittier is adequate to meet the current year-round and transient needs, there is demand for single-family homes in Whittier.

High-density housing development in the core area may be the most cost-effective means of providing

housing; however, it does not seem to meet the desires of most residents.



*Residents at the February 2004 Visioning Workshop illustrated their desire for single-family homes*

Potential homebuyers are expected to request single-family units. Currently, the lands most suitable for development are in Subdivision Phase II along Shotgun Cove Road. Most of the lots, which are privately owned, have not been developed because utilities are not yet available in this area. As utilities are expanded following the Shotgun Cove Road project, development of the Subdivision Phase II lots should become more feasible.

The City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation and Chugach National Forest are in the process of developing a plan for subdivisions at Emerald Cove and Shotgun Cove.

With the City's receipt of management authority over 600 acres of State lands in Emerald Cove, located along the proposed Shotgun Cove Road and within Shotgun Cove, many residents are hopeful that additional single-family homes may become possible.

With additional housing at Emerald and Shotgun Coves, housing prices and property values throughout the Whittier area would likely increase to reflect the expense of development and increased demand. Property owners would see their equity increase, but property taxes would increase for homeowners, as well. Tenants would incur higher rent rates, making it difficult for lower income residents and those on fixed incomes to afford housing.

### City-owned facilities

The City owns its present administrative office complex comprised of two single apartments on the first floor of Begich Towers. The City Council, and the Port and Harbor Commission meet in the City Council Chambers in Building P-12 which also houses the City

<sup>5</sup> Personal conversation with Sam Gimelli, Keller Williams Realty, who handles realty in Whittier, September 29, 2011.



every several years. Sewer lines in the harbor area were installed in 1988 and sewer mains in the core area were upgraded in 1999. Additional piping was constructed around the small boat harbor in 2003 and 2004.

### Future Needs

The 2004 *Whittier Water System Master Plan* states that a water main extension on Whittier Street from Dojer's Shop to the railroad crossing at Whittier Creek is needed to complete a water main loop for the western area of the Small Boat Harbor. This will ensure that there is adequate capacity for fire protection for the Small Boat Harbor as well as for cruise ship use.

The Water System Plan recommended relocation of the water wells to open up additional developable land in the core area and to move the water source away from the industrial area. This remains a need.<sup>8</sup>

Residential, commercial and other infrastructure development at Shotgun Cove will require a municipal water supply and distribution system for general use and fire protection. Wastewater collection, treatment and disposal alternatives will need to be explored and a system implemented. Shotgun Cove systems may support development between the Whittier core area and Shotgun Cove, although the final configuration of systems has yet to be determined. A utility trench has been blasted along the portion of Shotgun Cove Road that has been constructed to facilitate future utilities installation.

Utilities infrastructure including water and wastewater systems are needed for development at Head of Passage Canal, as well. These systems would support commercial and industrial development in Whittier.

The existing sewer treatment system in the core area is sized for a permanent (wintertime) population of 1,150 residents, and a summer visitor population of 2,430 people, for a total of 3,580 people. When Whittier's core area population starts to approach these population figures, the City's sewer treatment program will need to be reevaluated.

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<sup>8</sup> Phone conversation with CRW engineer, Pete Bellezza, September 21, 2011.

## Public and private utility services

### Electric power supply

Chugach Electric Association, Inc., a member-owned electric cooperative, supplies electric power to the City of Whittier. Serving Anchorage as well as all of the communities along the Turnagain Arm, Chugach is the largest electrical cooperative in Alaska. Chugach generates power to serve its members and wholesale customers from hydroelectric and gas turbine sources located in Southcentral Alaska.

Chugach supplies electric power to Whittier via a single 25 kilovolt (kV), three-phase power line extending from its Portage Substation approximately 11 miles to city's core 'triangle' area. The Chugach 25 kV distribution system serving Whittier can accommodate a peak electric demand of approximately 10,000 kilowatts (kW). From the Portage Substation, the 25 kV power line extends overhead to the entrance of the Anton Anderson tunnel, where it transitions to an underground circuit extending into the city. Currently, the typical peak annual electric demand of the City is between 1,000 and 1,500 kW.

The City owns several emergency backup generator units due to the remote location of the community and a 200,000-gallon bulk fuel storage facility is under construction in the core area. The portable units can supply a total of 850 kW of reserve power. Most building complexes, as well as the harbor, have their own back-up units. A few buildings, however, are not covered by emergency electrical power. The City accommodates these shortfalls by rotating power during an emergency.

Depending on the scope of community infrastructure and commercial developments, the electric supply system serving Whittier may require improvements and upgrades. Harbor expansion projects, Alaska Marine Highway ferry dock upgrades, access improvement projects (i.e., railways, roadways), potential commercial and residential developments in the Emerald Bay/Shotgun Cove vicinity, as well as community infrastructure projects such as community centers, schools, and recreational facilities may require improvements to the electric system.

The cost of improvements or upgrades to the main Chugach Electric supply system serving the City would be borne by the entire Cooperative, therefore lessening the local economic impact. Electrical line

extensions to commercial and residential developments would be in accordance with Chugach electrical service tariffs as filed with the Regulatory Commission of Alaska. Improvements to the main electrical system required to serve major industrial customers may require a special contract with the utility.

### Telephone, Internet and cable television

Services provided by Yukon Telephone and their affiliated company, Supervision Cable TV, include telephone service, Internet service and cable television.

The Whittier telephone exchange is owned by the Yukon Telephone Company. Yukon Telephone continues to modernize its equipment for the communities it serves. There are approximately 580 local phone connections in use in Whittier. For long distance calls, the exchange uses 16 long distance fiber-optic trunks routed through the small tunnel. All telephone cables within the City are located underground.



*Modern communication systems are important to Whittier residents*

There are currently about 260 Internet subscribers in Whittier. Begich Towers Incorporated (BTI) has a contract with Supervision Cable for services within Begich Towers and then subcontracts with Begich Towers residents. Cable television service, offering a variety of channels is available throughout the community, as well. Yukon Telephone/Supervision

receives the signal via satellite dishes and provides service through cable to subscribers.

### Solid waste services

Since early 1994, the City has contracted with Waste Management of Alaska (formerly Peninsula Sanitation, Inc.) to haul refuse from Whittier to the Anchorage Landfill. Trash is deposited in dumpsters located at the harbor office, harbor east ramp, harbor store and Building P-12. During the winter season, most of these are emptied by Waste Management once every two weeks on Friday. Some are emptied on an on-call basis as needed. Beginning May 1, a summer schedule is implemented with more frequent pick-ups to accommodate the higher use rate associated with the season. Additional dumpsters are located in other areas of the community but are not a part of the City's contract with Waste Management of Alaska.

Whittier's location, regional geology, and limited land base make it difficult to envision how the community might develop a landfill that would meet state and federal requirements. As a result, the City will continue to transport solid waste to Anchorage for the foreseeable future. Future growth will result in additional solid waste generated in the community, presumably expanding the services needed from the private solid waste contractor.

### Natural gas

Enstar Natural Gas Company provides natural gas to Whittier. The petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL) line that formerly transported fuel from the Department of Defense tank farm in Whittier to Anchorage along Turnagain Arm was refitted in 1997 by Enstar to make available natural gas service to the communities of Whittier, Indian, Bird Creek and Girdwood. Rates for natural gas in Whittier are similar to Anchorage rates, which compare favorably with the rest of the country.

### Future Needs

Current plans for Shotgun Cove Road include a buried utility duct through which electric, telephone, and possibly cable TV wires could be run. Coordination is underway with Enstar to determine funding, placement, and other factors relating to the placement of a gas line during road development. The gas line must be at least five feet from the electrical utility lines.

Plans, at this time, call for Whittier city water to be piped to Shotgun Cove. Sewer service would only be extended as far as Cove Creek and the currently platted residential lots. These plans are still under development and are subject to change.

## Road System in Whittier

Roads are generally categorized into functional classes. Functional classification is the grouping of roads, streets, and highways into integrated systems, ranked by relative importance and function served, relative to mobility and land access.

It also identifies the role each street or highway should play in channeling the flow of traffic in a logical and efficient manner. The general functional classification categories identified in Whittier's municipal code are Major, Collector and Local Roads, and Alleys. These are defined in Table 8.

The classification system designated in the municipal code does not consider traffic volumes but primarily relies on roadway width and definition. The definitions of Major and Collector Streets are very similar with the width being the primary distinction. Using width as the deciding factor, most roads would fall into the local street category. The Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) figures collected in 2001 (shown in Table 9) offer additional data to aid the City of Whittier in classifying its roads.

The Whittier Public Safety Director reports that the boat ramp and Triangle Road areas have the highest accident rates in Whittier.



*A train enters Whittier from the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel as outbound vehicles wait their turns*

The following inventory of Whittier roads indicates their classification based on AADT and function within the community. These roads are shown in Figure 4: Functional Classifications on the following page.

**Table 8: Whittier's Current Road Classification and Standards\***

Classification	Description	Right-of-Way	Surface Width
Major Roads	A street designed to move traffic between major traffic generators in the city.	60 feet	40 feet
Collectors	A street designed to move traffic from local streets to major streets	50 feet	30 feet
Local Streets	A street designated to provide traffic access to individual abutting properties	40 feet	25 feet
Alleys	A public right-of-way shown on a plat that provides secondary access to a lot, block or parcel of land	20 feet	20 feet
Driveways	City code currently being written.		

*\*As designated in the City of Whittier's Municipal Code*



Figure 4: Functional Classifications

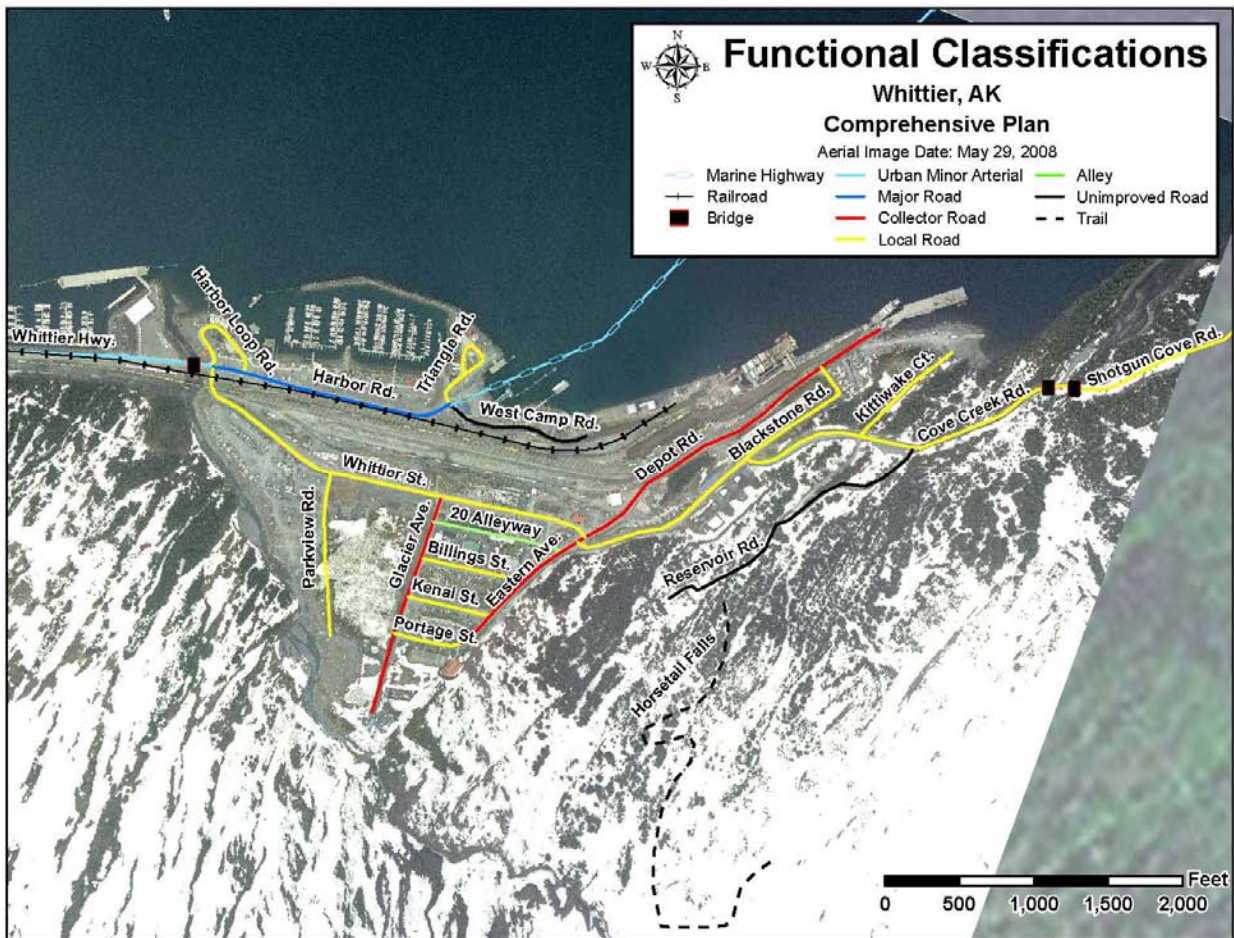


Table 9: 2001 Traffic Counts for Whittier

Road Name	Average Daily Traffic		Annual Average Daily Traffic
	May Hi/low	July Hi/low ADT	
West Camp Road	1539/587	2139/1312	1500
Whittier Street	2879/1040	2405/1361	1800
Glacier Avenue	826/469	1252/822	600
Blackstone Road	297/160	433/304	200
Depot Road	458/305	638/305	400
Cove Creek Road	88/25	196/45	50

Source: phone conversation with ADOT Central Region Planner, Joselyn Biloan, and Whittier Transportation Plan, 2001.



## Major Roads

Two roads in Whittier qualify as major roads.

### West Camp Road



*West Camp Road leading into Whittier*

West Camp Road is a major road providing access from the ferry terminal to the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel and the Seward Highway. Due to its significance as an access point between the Alaska Marine Highway and the Seward Highway this road is included on the National Highway System. West Camp Road also provides access to cruise ship facilities, permit parking, public harbor, railroad facilities, marine tour facilities, coast guard auxiliary station, harbor office, used oil collection facility, a variety of businesses and fee off-street parking.

### Whittier Street

Whittier Street runs between West Camp Road and Eastern Avenue. Whittier Street provides important access to Begich Towers, fee parking, rail industrial area, Shoreside Petroleum tank farm and storage, boat storage, public works/city council chambers building, fish processing plant, fire department, Anchor Inn, grocery, restaurant, and the pedestrian tunnel to the waterfront. The pedestrian and bicycle amenities on this road are minimal and should be improved to meet existing need. Currently, there are only a few scattered sidewalks offering little protection from the high amount of vehicular traffic.

### Collector Roads

Three roads in Whittier qualify as collector roads.

### Glacier Avenue

Glacier Avenue runs from Whittier Street, past Portage Street to the new Whittier Creek levee. It provides access to Begich Towers, the school, camping/RV hook-ups, Whittier Falls, storage units, public works facility, and municipal property. Its condition is fair to poor with potholes and cracking throughout. There is erosion damage to the land on the west side of Glacier Avenue.

### Eastern Avenue

Eastern Avenues lies between Portage and Whittier Streets. It provides access to the school, Begich Towers, the Kayak Place, and Anchor Inn. This paved road is in excellent condition. There is four-foot sidewalk with a curb and gutter on the west side that is in fair condition.

### Depot Road

Depot Road is located between Hill and Whittier Streets, Blackstone Road, and the Eastern Avenue intersection. It provides access to the barge dock, long-term parking, bar and pizza place, and Anchor Inn. The condition of the road is good. There is a small section of road in extreme disrepair northeast of Hill Street. Depot Road lacks pedestrian facilities.

### Local Roads

The majority of roads in Whittier qualify as local.

### Blackstone Road

Blackstone Road runs between Eastern Avenue and Hill Street. Blackstone Road passes the Buckner Building and provides access to the Alaska West building, Smitty's Cove, and Whittier Manor. The road is in fair condition with some cracking and potholes throughout. There are a curb and gutter and four feet of sidewalk on the east side ending at the Buckner Building. The sidewalk is in very poor condition. An erosion ditch begins where the sidewalk ends.

### Shotgun Cove Road

In 2011, construction was completed on Phase II of Shotgun Cove Road. Along with Phase I, which was completed in 2009, over half of an approximately 2-mile road extending from Blackstone Road to the Emerald Bay Trailhead has been built and is providing benefits to the community.

Shotgun Cove Road provides access to existing public recreational areas used by both residents and visitors to Whittier. A scenic pull-off has already been built, and a picnic area and kayak launch are part of the Phase IV design. This is an important recreational access road and it is critical that it meet current safety standards.

#### *Hill Street*

Hill Street is located between Blackstone Road and Depot Road. Hill Street provides access to Whittier Manor and the Alaska West building. The road is in generally poor condition due to narrowness, potholes, and poor visibility. There is an erosion ditch on the north side of the road.

#### *Parkview Road*

Parkview Road runs south from Whittier Street. It provides access to undeveloped municipal and private lands, the municipal park, floodplain, and a private camping park. The road is in poor condition.

#### *Triangle Road*

Triangle Road is named for its distinctive shape. It runs one way and borders the Small Boat Harbor off West Camp Road. Triangle Road is the commercial hub of the community; accessing on-street parking, the harbor, Mariners' Memorial, dock, kayak rentals, eating establishments, public restrooms, and gift shops. Triangle Road is in excellent condition. It is paved and has wide sidewalks, curbs and gutters.

#### *Billings Street*

Billings Street lies between Glacier Avenue and Eastern Avenue. It provides access to 72-hour parallel parking on the south side, off-street parking and storage, the Kayak Center, marine facilities, boat storage, and storage units. The road condition is good with minimal cracking and potholes. It has a curb and gutter and four-foot sidewalks in poor condition on both sides of the street.

#### *Kenai Street*

Kenai Street runs between Glacier and Eastern Avenues. It provides access to diagonal parking, 72-hour parallel parking, Begich Towers, which houses the majority of Whittier residents and office space, and the reindeer house. The road condition is fair to poor with numerous cracks and potholes. The drainage is poor with evidence of ponding. There is a crumbling gutter and a four-foot sidewalk on the north side of the

road. There is a curb and gutter and a four-foot sidewalk in fair condition abutting Begich Towers.

#### *Portage Street*

Portage Street is located between Glacier and Eastern Avenues. It provides access to the school and Begich Towers. The road's condition is fair with some cracks and potholes. Although this road provides access to the school, there is no bike path or sidewalk abutting the school; however, a crosswalk has been striped for safer crossing. There is also an under-street crossing connecting Begich Towers and the school. There are a curb and gutter and a four-foot sidewalk on the Begich Tower side of the street.

#### *Harbor Loop Road*

Harbor Loop Road branches off West Camp Road. It provides access to an inn and restaurant, a coffee shop, satellite dishes, parallel parking, Shoreside Petroleum, and a boarding dock. Its condition is good, with rolled curbs and six-foot sidewalks. Additional facilities for day cruise vessels and private boats, and recreational vehicles within the vicinity and on the west side of Harbor Loop Road are planned. Improvements were made to Harbor Loop Road in summer 2004.

#### *Kittiwake Court*

Kittiwake Court branches off Cove Creek Road. It provides access to Smitty's Cove, and undeveloped lots. The gravel road is in poor condition with a steep slope leading to the water. There are no pedestrian facilities.

#### *Cove Creek Road*

Cove Creek Road is classified as a local road and is constructed of gravel. It provides access to the Salmon Run picnic area, a few residential sites, Emerald Cove Trail, and Horsetail Falls Trail, which are tourist destinations. Along this road are two new bridges

#### *O'Neil Road*

O'Neil Road starts at West Camp Road. It accesses old World War II bunkers, private land, and the access road to the Portage trailhead. The road is in fair condition.

#### *Tank Farm Road*

Tank Farm Road runs between West Camp Road and the harbor. It accesses the Department of Defense tank farm, truck fill stand, mainline pumphouse, combination building, , fire pumphouse, and the

harbor. The end of the road opens to a large paved area that offers an excellent view of Passage Canal, City of Whittier, mountains, and glaciers.

### ***Alleys***

#### ***Alleyway***

The Alleyway is located between Eastern and Glacier Avenues. It accesses buildings and a parking lot that abut the south side of Whittier Street, and the buildings along the north side of Billings Street. The alley is narrow and in poor condition. This is the only road in Whittier that meets the criteria for an alley.

### ***Planned Roads***

#### ***Shotgun Cove Road extension***

Construction on Phase IV of this project is anticipated to begin in 2013, and upon completion, will help the City of Whittier to meet its goals of:

- Improving the safety and efficiency of the Whittier road system;
- Providing new and/or enhance existing recreational opportunities in and around Whittier; and
- Assisting in the economic development of the community.

Shotgun Cove Road provides access to existing public recreational areas used by both residents and visitors to Whittier. A scenic pull-off has already been built, and a picnic area and kayak launch are part of the Phase IV design. This is an important recreational access road and it is critical that it meet current safety standards.

### ***Pedestrian/Bicycle System***

The military installed sidewalks with rolled curbs in the core area and sidewalks were added throughout the harbor and Triangle areas in 2004; in other areas of Whittier people walk in the street. In the summer, a fence prohibits pedestrians from walking across the railroad tracks in compliance with Homeland Security regulations. A pedestrian pathway under the railroad yard provides a vital connection from the harbor area to the core area and main residential area. The pedestrian underpass, constructed by ARRC was completed in June 2002, and is a 300-foot-long crossing beneath the rail yard, from the waterfront area to the Whittier town site. A 10-foot-diameter corrugated pipe provides the underpass frame, enclosing a concrete pathway. Covered portal ramps

at each end provide access, and covered pathways lead to the tunnel openings. The tunnel has significantly improved pedestrian safety in the rail yard area.

The Whittier Subdivision Ordinance encourages sidewalks to be constructed within right of ways; however, it lacks specificity regarding placement on the road, or their accompanying improvements such as utility boxes, street trees, or driveway aprons.

ADOT&PF installed a separated bike/walkway between West Camp Road and Passage Canal. That pathway connects to a sidewalk through the harbor area to the Triangle.

Facilities are also limited for cyclists. Except for the separated pathway and wide shoulders leading into Whittier from the tunnel, bicycle facilities are minimal. It is important to preserve pathway corridors and consider wide shoulders for cyclists on all major and collector routes.

### ***Trails***

There are three major trails in Whittier: the Portage Pass Trail, the Horsetail Falls Trail, and the Emerald Cove Trail. A project is underway in 2011 to rehabilitate and improve these trails to increase user safety and to make them more accessible to hikers of various abilities.

#### ***Portage Pass Trail***

The Portage Pass trailhead is on the south side of the West Camp Road across from the tank farm. The trail is steep, but still possible for even the novice hiker. The trail used to be an old mining road and can be dusty during the summer months. Due to the elevation gain, snow can persist into late spring or early summer.

The Portage Pass trail offers views of Passage Canal, the surrounding mountains, and glaciers. A good picnic site is available near Divide Lake about midway along the trail, which leads to Portage Glacier. The trail begins in low shrubs and trees and extends above the timberline.

The majority of the trail is in Chugach National Forest, and is maintained by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) except for a parcel of land at the beginning of the trail that is privately owned. The USFS does not have a formal trailhead because the trailhead is on private property. The Forest Service is trying to obtain these unused parcels for a trailhead and parking. There are other issues with private and ARRC ownership in



resource development such as the natural gas pipeline occurs.

Great Pacific Seafood uses the ARRC dock to unload their fishing vessels.

### **Cruise Ship Facilities**

Cruise ships currently stop several times a week at a new, floating dock and embarkation building, from May-September. The dock and building are owned by Whittier Dock Enterprises LLC. The dock and 20,000 square foot building can accommodate a single cruise ship visit each day.

Unlike a port of call, this dock provides the "turnaround" visit for these massive ships, which range up to 950 feet and 90,000 tons. They call at Whittier due to its proximity to Anchorage and tourism venues throughout Southcentral Alaska. The Alaska Railroad also provides a convenient rail terminal across the street, just steps from the cruise ship.<sup>14</sup>

ARRC constructed a special rail spur to accommodate transportation on cruise ship passengers arriving and departing from Whittier.

Passage Canal Development reports that approximately 20 Whittier residents are employed at the cruise ship facility, many as longshoremen.

### **Airport**

Whittier Airport is located approximately one mile northwest of the Whittier core area near the Head of Passage Canal. The land is leased from the Department of Defense, which, in August 2004, began negotiations with the ARRC for an extension of the lease to move its expiration to November 2008.

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

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.whittiermarina.com/cruisedock/cruisedock.htm>

The runway was once 500 feet longer but it was damaged by the 1964 earthquake. The runway is geographically constrained by mountainous terrain, tidal water, and by the only access road into Whittier. There is no lighting system, navigational aids, or fuel available at the airport and there are no based aircraft there.

The ADOT&PF completed a reconnaissance study that identified potential new locations for an airport in 2003. This report compared various future scenarios for the airport including closure of the current airport and airport relocation to one of eight considered sites. Closure of the airport without relocation would eliminate a landing place for wheeled aircraft in western Prince William Sound.

Potential relocation sites along Passage Canal that were considered included Billings Creek, Poe Bay, Logging Camp Bay, Pigot Bay, Point Pigot, Emerald Bay, Shotgun Cove and Tebenkof Bay. The Emerald Bay location was favored in that study for several reasons. It is located only 3.5 miles from Whittier in the direction that will be accessed by Shotgun Cove Road, currently under development. The Emerald Bay site has a relatively low percentage of Part 77 penetrations compared to the other sites considered and has two potential approach surfaces. It would have visual contact with Portage Pass and radio contact with Whittier.<sup>15</sup>

The Whittier City Council has passed a resolution in support of a joint endeavor with the ADOT&PF to pursue the Emerald Bay relocation alternative as its first choice, though not eliminating the other alternatives from consideration. This partnership between the State and the local community would entail the development of a more full-service facility with accommodations for wheeled and floatplane operations. They envision an economically self-sustaining facility with services such as transient parking, fueling, and possibly maintenance available. A facility such as this could serve as a base for flight-seeing tours and other visitor services and is a key element in Whittier's plans for economic development.

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<sup>15</sup> *Whittier Airport Master Plan Project Reports, Briefing Paper, Technical Memorandum 1 Conditions and Needs Assessment, Technical Memorandum 2 Alternatives Development and Analysis*, Prepared for Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, August 2003

There are two condominium associations in Whittier. The Begich Towers, Inc. (BTI) is operated by the Begich Towers Homeowners Association, a non-profit corporation. BTI employs maintenance staff for the upkeep of Begich Towers. The Whittier Manor Association manages the Whittier Manor. Its employees include a maintenance worker and a part-time manager.

### **Future economic development opportunities**

While many look forward to the possibility of community expansion in, and along the proposed road toward, Shotgun Cove or other areas for economic development opportunities, there is also economic potential nearby and readily accessible in the core area, including the existing Small Boat Harbor and at the head of Passage Canal. Development in and around the core area and at the head of Passage Canal could successfully focus on Whittier's more immediate needs, while Shotgun Cove development could respond to Whittier's long-term possibilities as a residential community and tourist destination.

Many development possibilities were discussed during the public involvement process, with the Whittier Planning and Zoning Commission, the Whittier Planning Task Force, and the Shotgun Cove Development Team. Additional economic development opportunities could be explored through the development of a Community Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Information on CEDS funding is available from the State of Alaska, Department of Commerce at [www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca](http://www.commerce.state.ak.us/dca).

The following economic development suggestions are a synthesis of the ideas generated by these groups.

#### **Economic opportunities in Whittier's core area and at the head of Passage Canal**

The heart of Whittier is the core area where economic opportunities include the following:

##### ***Capitalize on the economic potential of increased tourism.***

As shown throughout this chapter, tourism is on the rise and Whittier is uniquely positioned to benefit from this trend. Plan participants stated that when visitors come to Whittier, they should feel welcome and should be made aware of all that Whittier has to offer.

One way to welcome visitors is through an information center. There tourists can learn about Whittier's history, its businesses, and its local attractions. Maps of hiking trails and brochures advertising local eateries, recreational opportunities, and stores should be available. Improved signage could be utilized to direct visitors to areas of interest. The friendly attitude of local residents and business operators will help to make a visit to Whittier pleasurable and will encourage people to return.

As more visitors come to Whittier, demand would be created for additional visitor services. Cruise ship passengers, in town for only a limited time, would want planned tours to such destinations as the Black-footed Kittiwake rookery, the hatchery, or museum. Guided or self-guided walking tours of the town could be planned and hikes or kayak excursions could be facilitated. Additional tourists could support additional retail stores, local art sales, and additional eateries. Other possible businesses to serve tourists could include various forms of shuttle service around town or to the Begich-Boggs Visitor Center in Portage.

##### ***Research strategies for attracting new commercial development.***

The City should encourage the private sector to develop businesses in Whittier. The process should be made as straightforward as possible, with requirements made clear and easy to access.

The state and federal government frequently has funding available for economic development, which should be pursued. The Rural Information Center (RIC), a joint project of the USDA Cooperative State Research, Education & Extension Service and the National Agricultural Library, is one source for information. Topics include:

- Successful strategies, models, and case studies of community development projects
- Small business attraction, retention, and expansion
- Tourism promotion and development

The RIC can be accessed at <http://www.nal.usda.gov/ric/>. This website also



includes a database of federal funding sources for rural areas.<sup>23</sup>

*The tank farm and airport lie at the head of Passage Canal.*

### **Port of Whittier Harbor Development Project**

The Port of Whittier Harbor Development Project is a regional harbor enhancement initiative that will address immediate and future commercial and recreational boating needs, boost economic development, and serve as a catalyst for transportation infrastructure improvements. The project will involve improvement of the existing Small Boat Harbor and construction of a new boat harbor at the head of Passage Canal.

It is anticipated that the project will be constructed in phases:

- Phase I – Existing Small Boat Harbor  
Reconfigure and replace aging float system. Slope stabilization has been added.
- Phase II – Head of Passage Canal  
Construct new, additional boat harbor.
- East boat ramp reconstruction has been completed.

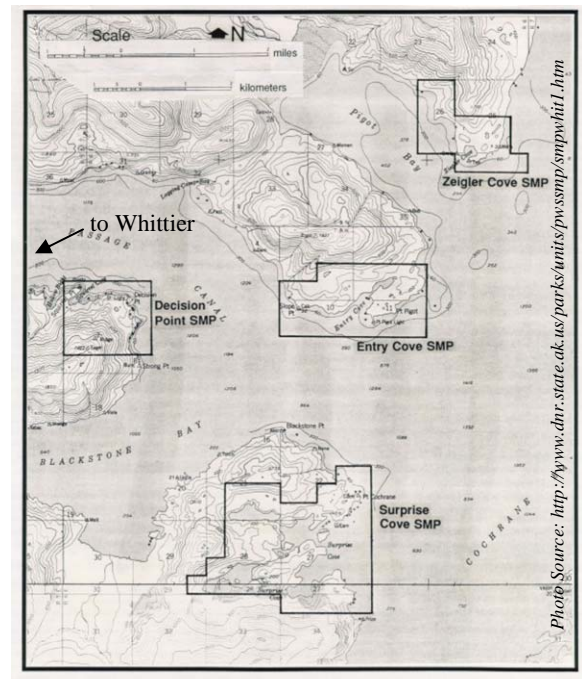
### **Economic opportunities at and toward Shotgun Cove**

The City has been deeded 600 acres of land by the State of Alaska. The new townsite would provide a more attractive setting for visitors and would provide recreational opportunities for them. In return, this would create more employment opportunities in the community

The residents of Whittier would be the major beneficiaries if Shotgun Cove is developed into a new townsite and a center for recreational activity in Prince William Sound. At present, most Whittier residents live in the Begich Towers, Whittier Manor, or the Anchor Annex. The absence of other housing stock is an issue for many residents and discourages some people from living in the community. Development of Shotgun Cove would provide a variety of housing stock and provide more long-term, sustainable jobs in Whittier for local residents. The City's tax base would

increase and, with this additional revenue, the City would be able to improve its delivery of public services to residents. Greater numbers of visitors would also result in more businesses in the community and a wider variety of goods and services that would be available for local residents. This would include more restaurants, retail outlets, and various services.

Residents of Anchorage and other visitors to Whittier will also benefit from development of Shotgun Cove. At present, the waiting list for moorage at the Small Boat Harbor includes over 400 vessels. For vessels of certain sizes, the wait for a slip could exceed 15 years. A marina at Shotgun Cove would reduce the waiting time.



*Four State Marine Parks closest to Whittier*

In addition to marine-oriented activities, other recreational activities would be available for Whittier residents and visitors alike. Decision Point State Marine Park, located about two miles beyond Shotgun Cove on the point between Passage Canal and Blackstone Bay, would continue to be accessible from the water but additional trail access could be developed from the Shotgun Cove area. Increased visitors to Whittier and Prince William Sound would result in increased revenue for service providers.

Usage of the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel would increase, as well, resulting in higher toll revenues. With additional rail service for cruise ship passengers

<sup>23</sup> Contact information for the Rural Information Center: 10301 Baltimore Avenue, Room 304, Beltsville, MD 20705-2351. Phone: 1-800-633-7701. Fax (301)504-5181.

and an expected increase in vehicular traffic due to Shotgun Cove development, tunnel hours and schedules will require careful examination.

The private sector members of the Shotgun Cove Development Team will also benefit if Shotgun Cove is developed. As established in a memorandum of understanding (MOU), all contracting for professional services associated with development of City lands will be with the private sector members of the Development Team. In return for their contributions and the risk associated with developing the project, the private sector members of the Development Team will participate in the income generated from the development of Shotgun Cove and subsequent land sales and other income-generating activity.

It is essential that the remaining phases of Shotgun Cove Road be completed to fulfill the development potential this land holds for Whittier. Because of the limited land available in the core area, development of Shotgun Cove is critical to further growth for the City of Whittier.

## Chapter Six: Land ownership, use and management

In this chapter, land ownership, present land use, future land use, land use regulation and land management are described.

### Land ownership

Approximately 17 square miles, or almost 11,000 acres, exist within the Whittier municipal boundaries. Glaciers or water account for approximately 20 percent of that amount, leaving a total land area of less than 8,000 acres. Some of this land has grades in excess of 33 percent and therefore cannot be easily developed due to its steepness. Land ownership includes the Alaska Railroad Corporation, Federal Government, State of Alaska, City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation and privately owned and leased lands. See Figure 5: Whittier area land ownership and Figure 6: Whittier core area land ownership.

### Federal Government

The federal government, once the sole landowner in Whittier, currently owns approximately 3,651 acres of lands that include acreage in the Chugach National Forest (especially at Trinity Point), the dock along the eastern waterfront in the town core area and lands at the tank farm at the Head of Passage Canal.

### ARRC/State of Alaska

The State of Alaska, currently the largest landowner in Whittier, owns approximately 2,776 acres in Whittier acquired through a 1983 National Forest Community Grant Selection. State property includes land along the coastline of Passage Canal and 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 Federal government in January 1985. The state owns some of the tidelands and submerged lands in Passage Canal and the state-owned ARRC owns approximately 8,000 feet of waterfront in the core area, which represents about 70 percent of the total waterfront area.

### City of Whittier

The City is the second largest landowner within the 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

working title to 228 acres in the Emerald Cove Subdivision (sections 8, 9, and 17). In 1994, it also obtained 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 patented title to these lands, the federal government must complete patent to the State, and then the City may survey the lands for ultimate and final patent to the City. The City is required to sell lands not needed for public purposes within ten years of receiving title, or by the year 2014. The City owns approximately 1,650 feet or 15 percent of the waterfront in the core area and leases about 5,000 feet of waterfront from the ARRC.

At present, the only land the City has fee simple title to is 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.

### Chugach Alaska Corporation

The Chugach Alaska Corporation is the third largest landowner in Whittier with 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.

### Privately owned and leased lands

There are a small number of parcels of land, less than 250 acres in all, owned by other private interests excluding Chugach Alaska Corporation. Most of these lands are in the Whittier core area and the Head of Passage Canal, with the remainder located along the beginning of the Shotgun Cove Road. About 15 percent of the waterfront is privately held.

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

At the Head of Passage Canal, the Alaska Railroad leases land to the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for an airstrip. The State is expected to decide soon whether to renew this lease. The Alaska Railroad also leases about 5000 feet of waterfront in the core area to the City.



Figure 5: Whittier area land ownership

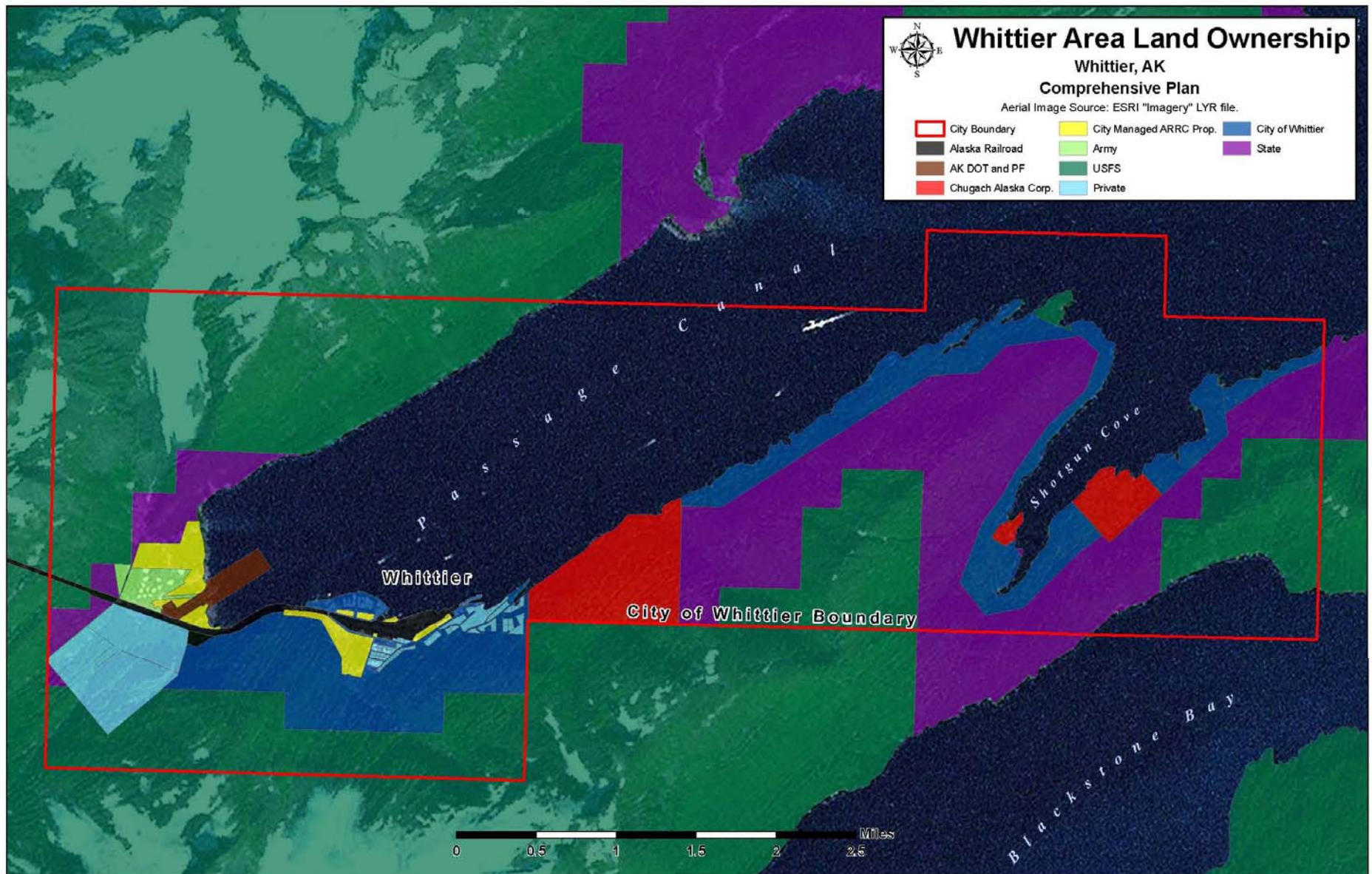
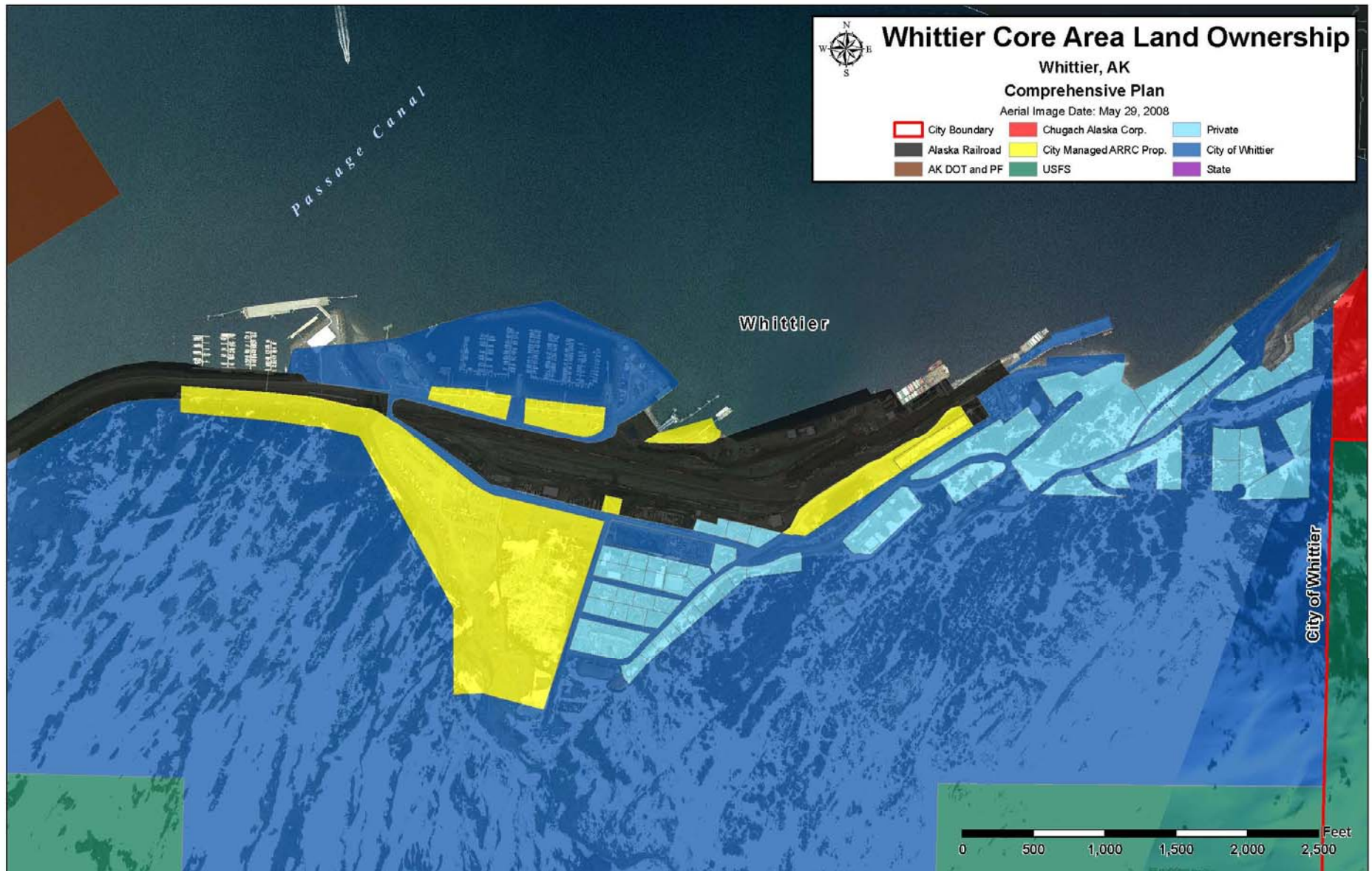




Figure 6: Whittier core area land ownership





In addition to the land leased to the City by the Alaska Railroad, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service leases about 38 acres at the Head of Passage Canal, adjacent to the U.S. Air Force former storage tank farm, to the City.

A parcel of approximately 6 acres, west of the school, is leased by the City to a private developer for use as a camping area.

### Existing land use

The existing land uses in Whittier include industrial, commercial, public, seasonal single-family residential, multi-family residential and vacant. Park lands outside of the core area and Head of Passage Canal are vacant. See Figure 5 for a map of existing land uses within the core area.



*Part of Whittier's core industrial area*

### Industrial Use

Approximately 58 percent of Whittier's presently developed land is used for industrial purposes. Industrial uses occur within the 212 acres of the Whittier core area or the Head of Passage Canal.

Major industrial uses include the following:

- the Alaska Railroad's industrial and passenger rail operations,
- roll-on, roll-off barge dock next to the Small Boat Harbor, and
- one seafood processing plant.

### Residential

Because almost all residents live in either the Anchor Annex Apartments or the Whittier Manor or Begich Towers condominiums, the amount of land used for residential development is currently very small, about 10 acres. There are also several dwellings located on land the City subdivided and sold east side of the core area during its first years of incorporation.

### Commercial

Whittier's commercial businesses are located in the Whittier core area and the harbor triangle. There is no Central Business District and commercial uses occupy a very small amount of the total land base, less than 5 acres. Commercial businesses are also located in Begich Towers.

Whittier has several new businesses. A new 25-room, 26,000 square foot hotel, a cruise ship dock, marina, and several smaller commercial ventures are all located along the waterfront. A 5-acre privately managed parking lot has been in operation on Whittier Street since 2000.

### Public

The small boat harbor is the major public facility in Whittier. The small boat harbor and its adjacent parking areas, boat and trailer storage areas and support facilities, comprise much of the existing waterfront development. The waterfront area within the core area is comprised of approximately 13,000 feet.

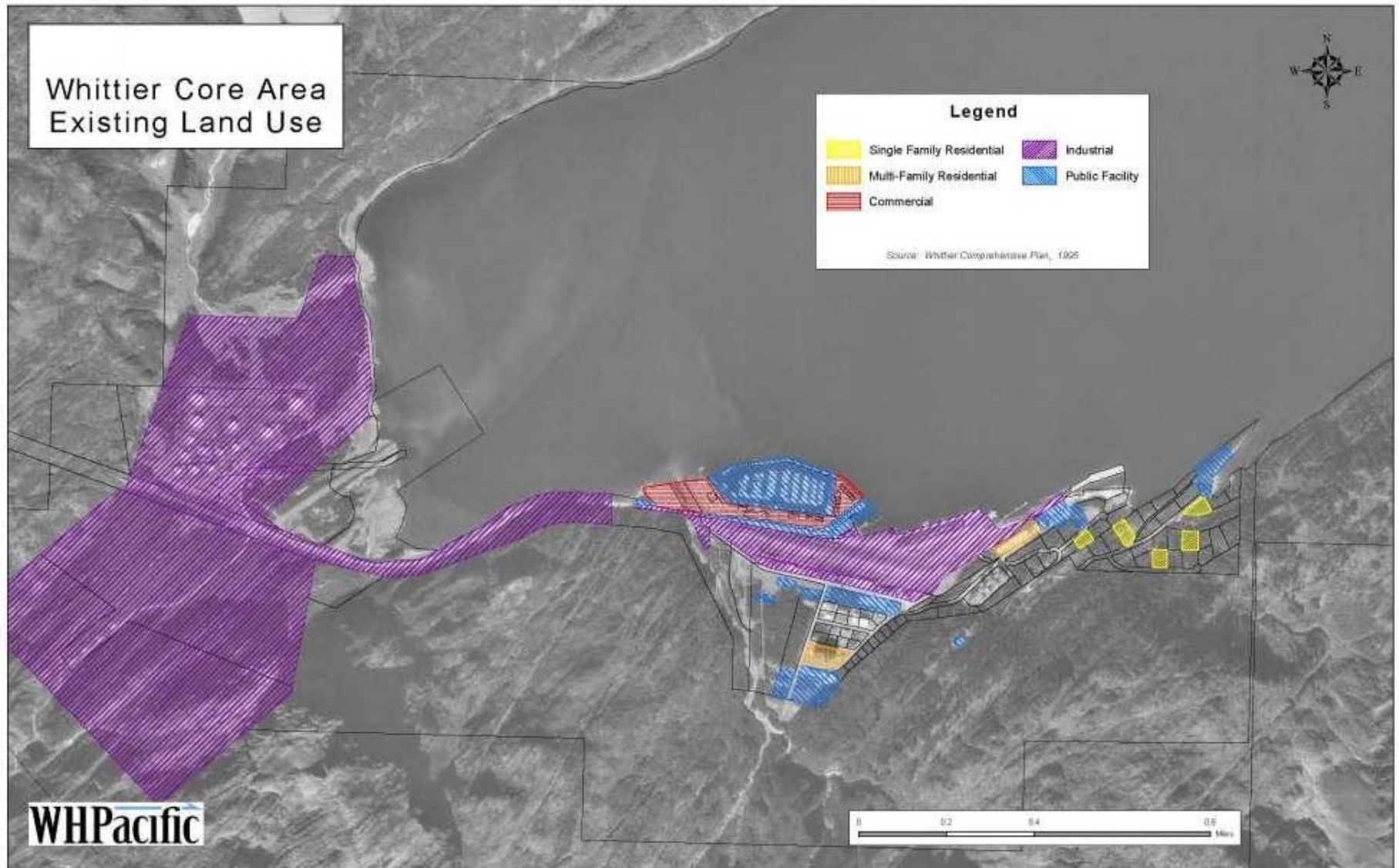
Smitty's Cove, located east of DeLong Dock, is used as a camping area, barge ramp, kayak launch and diving area. As an area with year-round water access, it is often used in diver and search and rescue certification and training.

Additional major public facilities include the school complex (about 5 acres), City offices (in Begich Towers), and the public works maintenance building. The city water wells are also located in this area. All public facilities are located in the Whittier core area and many are in former military structures. The police have also set up a firing range located at the Head of Passage Canal.

### Open Space/Recreational Uses

A one-acre private campground is located west of the school. In addition, city land adjacent to Glacier Avenue and Whittier Street contains a small park.

Figure 7: Whittier current land use



## **Vacant**

Over 900 acres of land within the city limits is vacant or open space. However, much of this land has steep slopes, heavy water run-off, or minimal amounts of top soil. Some is even glaciated. Of the 212 acres in the core area, only about 30 acres are uncommitted land suitable for development.

## **Future land use**

In the past, all development in Whittier could easily be accommodated by the relatively small amount of lands in the Whittier core area and at the head of Passage Canal. This land base, however, is inadequate to meet the variety and extent of projected land uses. While Whittier wants to concentrate future tourism/recreation and commercial development in these areas, it also wants to encourage residential and commercial growth to the east in Emerald Bay and Shotgun Cove areas. Most of these lands are presently undeveloped and in their natural state.

The future land use section can be divided into the Whittier core area, head of Passage Canal, and the Emerald and Shotgun Cove areas. Future land uses are shown on Figure 6.

### **Future land use in the Whittier core area**

This area presently serves as the center for all residential and commercial development and major waterfront facilities, the Small Boat Harbor and industrial port. The area supports a wide variety of mixed uses and much of the developable land base is occupied.

In the future, Whittier envisions this area continuing to support a wide variety of uses, with growth in tourism and recreational uses. The Whittier Museum needs a permanent location that will house its many exhibits in a visitor-friendly location. The U.S. Forest Service has approached the ARRC about the potential of enhancing the waterfront area, adjacent to the proposed passenger terminal, with a small visitor center. The visitor center would accommodate small groups and would include informational kiosks, outdoor viewing platforms, and restroom facilities. It would be appropriate to set land aside for these uses.

The core area serves as the center for all public services and facilities. The City offices and police, fire, school and public works facilities are located here. A goal of the City is to consolidate the City facilities and have recently pursued funding for a new

police, fire and emergency services building. With the anticipated increase in tourism, the need for expanding these services is recognized. Sites for new government facilities and a potential school site will also be reserved in the Shotgun Cove area. In the near future, the Whittier core area will continue to serve as the center for City services.

The land along Glacier Avenue is city owned and anticipated to be set aside for residential property.

At present, virtually all residents live in the Whittier core area in Whittier Manor, Anchor Inn Annex or Begich Towers. The City envisions these buildings continuing to be used for this purpose. Single-family residential development will be encouraged to be located in the Whittier core area and along the Shotgun Cove road. All of these lands have been platted and subdivided and most have been sold to private individuals.

Overall, future land use in the Whittier core area will continue to be mixed. The City, however, will guide expansion of the commercial business center in the core area and minimize use conflicts through this comprehensive plan.

### **Future Land Use at the Head of Passage Canal**

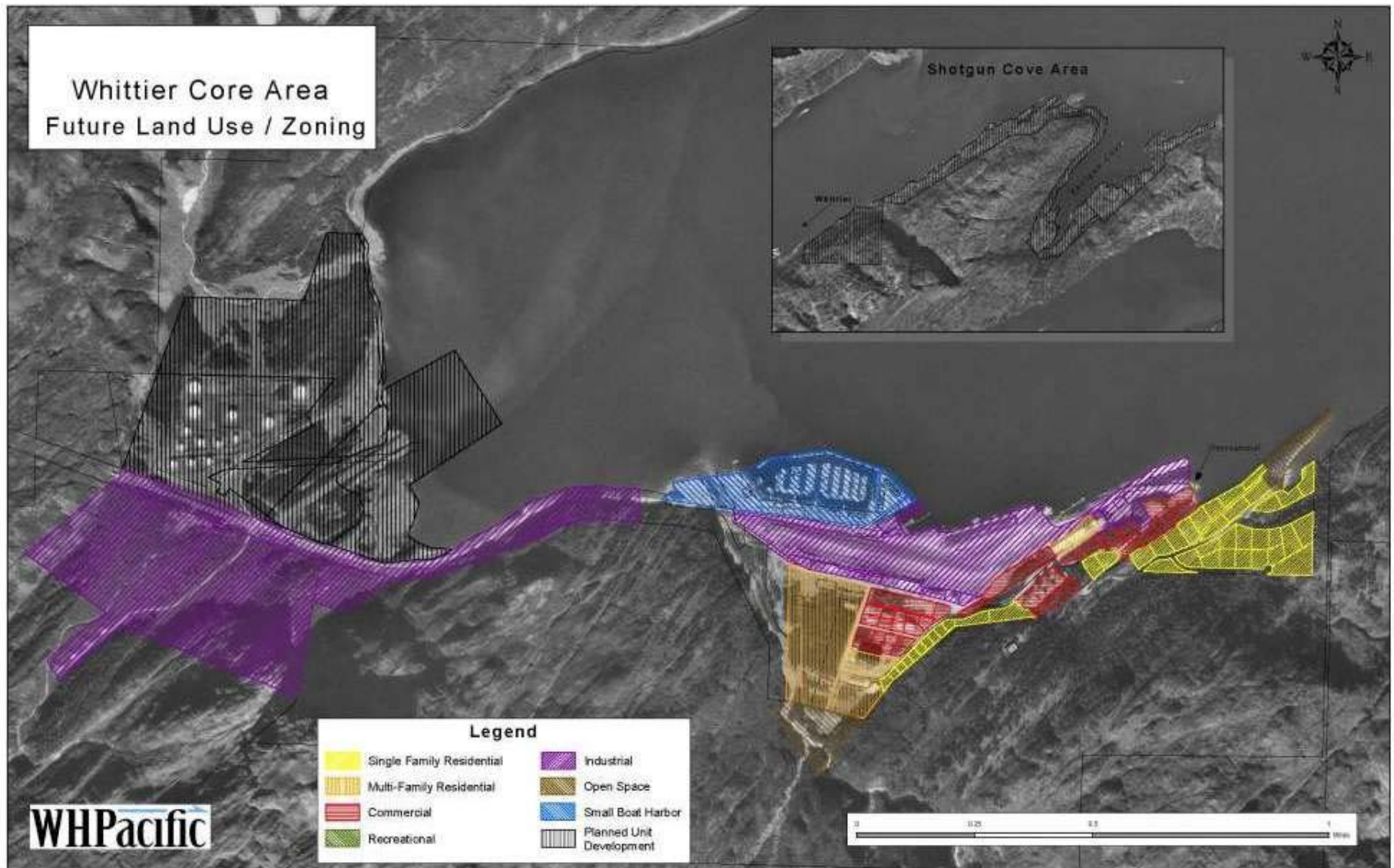
With exception of the fuel tank storage facilities, a short airstrip and the City's former landfill area, most of the lands at the head of Passage Canal are presently undeveloped.

The preferred future use for much of the lands at the head of Passage Canal is industrial and commercial harbor expansion. Possible industrial uses include an offloading facility for fuel barges, an industrial dock and storage yards for freight passing through an industrial port at the site, and a combination of recreational boating facilities.

Public input into this comprehensive plan indicated that while industrial uses should continue in this area, it is also appropriate to encourage light commercial and recreational uses in this area, particularly near the airport. Examples of recreational uses include a campground, trail, viewing/picnic area fishing lagoon, fish viewing area and city park. Light commercial uses included a small boat repair shop and a seasonal open market or regular Whittier Fair for summer visitors.



Figure 8: Future land use/zoning map





The City could regulate business licenses for vendors to prevent excessive duplication of services or competition with established local businesses. An informational kiosk or gazebo at the head of Passage Canal, would provide information to visitors.

The City has entered into a lease with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to use a 37-acre tract at the head of Passage Canal. The City Police department has developed a small rifle range in the area.

The City is currently working on a land management plan for the development of an area encompassing approximately 105 acres of ARRC lands that are managed by the City at the head of Passage Canal. *The Head of Passage Canal Land Management Plan* is intended to help facilitate small boat harbor, residential, commercial, industrial, and/or open space/recreational opportunities. The purposes of the plan are to provide a layout for future development, direction to proceed with a design study and feasibility analysis, and how to share costs among the public and private entities having an interest in its development. The plan will assess road, rail, and marine facilities, utilities, and other infrastructure needs for development.

The lease signed in 1998 between the ARRC and the City recognized that having essentially all of the developable land in the City under one management regime would “enhance development of the premises and the adjacent City-owned land (including tidelands), thereby generating needed lease revenues, and enable the City to tailor its long-term needs to its unique requirements.”

The City anticipates designating the head of Passage Canal as a Planned Unit Development (PUD) under Chapter 17 of the Whittier Municipal Code. The intent of this designation is to allow flexibility in an area where standard commercial development is balanced with a mix of open space and recreational areas. The PUD designation would encourage the preservation of trees, shorelines, natural topography and geologic features, the prevention of soil erosion, and would promote an environment of stable character in harmony with the surrounding area. A development project would have to be designed to provide both variety and diversity, so that the maximum long-range benefit would be gained and the unique features of the development site would be preserved and enhanced.

## Future Land Use in Emerald Cove and Shotgun Cove

At present, most lands in the area east of the Whittier Core are undeveloped and in their natural state. Until recently, the lands were part of the Chugach National Forest and managed by the U.S. Forest Service.

The transfer of most lands in this area to the State, the City and Chugach Alaska Corporation means that these lands are one step closer to development. Whittier wants to encourage appropriate development for the Emerald Cove area that includes single-family residential, multi-family residential, limited public purposes (school, utilities, and parks) and open space. The City wants to prohibit industrial development. It is expected these lots will be developed with single-family homes with independent utilities.

The City's intent for the Shotgun Cove area is to encourage development that will support a quality living environment for year-round residents, seasonal residents and tourism/recreational users. Construction of the proposed Shotgun Cove Road and Harbor is a necessary prerequisite for full-scale development in this area. Uses that will be permitted include

- commercial (hotels, lodges, restaurants, stores);
- public purposes (boat harbor, parking);
- single and multi-family residential; and
- open space/recreational uses for lands that are unsuitable for year round development.

The City is working closely with the Chugach Alaska Corporation (CAC) and State of Alaska to encourage development of the Shotgun Cove area. The CAC is interested in establishing commercial developments, and the State may dispose of additional lands. The City encourages high to medium density developments (commercial development and condominiums to 1-acre lots) on lands located close to the Cove's waterfront to receive an adequate return on their capital investments. However, the State lands are in the higher elevations located away from the shores of the Cove, and could allow low-density development (1- to 5-acre lots).

The following table compares the approximate current and recommended future acreage of Whittier's various zoning districts.

**Table 14: Zoning Acreage Comparison**

<b>Zoning District</b>	<b>Existing Acreage</b>	<b>Future Acreage</b>
Single Family Residential	33	35
Multi-family Residential	8	32
Commercial	27	27
Planned Unit Development	23	1,107
Industrial	402	329
Small Boat Harbor	34	35
Open Space	4	13
Public Facility	4	-
Recreational	-	132

### Land use regulation

Under Alaska Statutes, Title 29, the City has the option to adopt planning, platting and land use regulation powers. To carry out these powers, the City established a five member Planning Commission appointed by the City Council, and adopted zoning and subdivision ordinances.

Alaska State Statute Title 29 requires that a zoning code must be based on a land use plan in an approved Comprehensive Plan.

Title 29 of the Alaska Statutes governs the use of land in municipalities. The City of Whittier was incorporated in 1969 as a fourth-class city. The State Municipal Code (Title 29), revised in 1972, reclassified fourth-class cities as second-class cities. Whittier became and has remained a second-class city because of its population, which has always remained well below the 400 resident threshold for first-class cities. 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.

Alaska Statute 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.

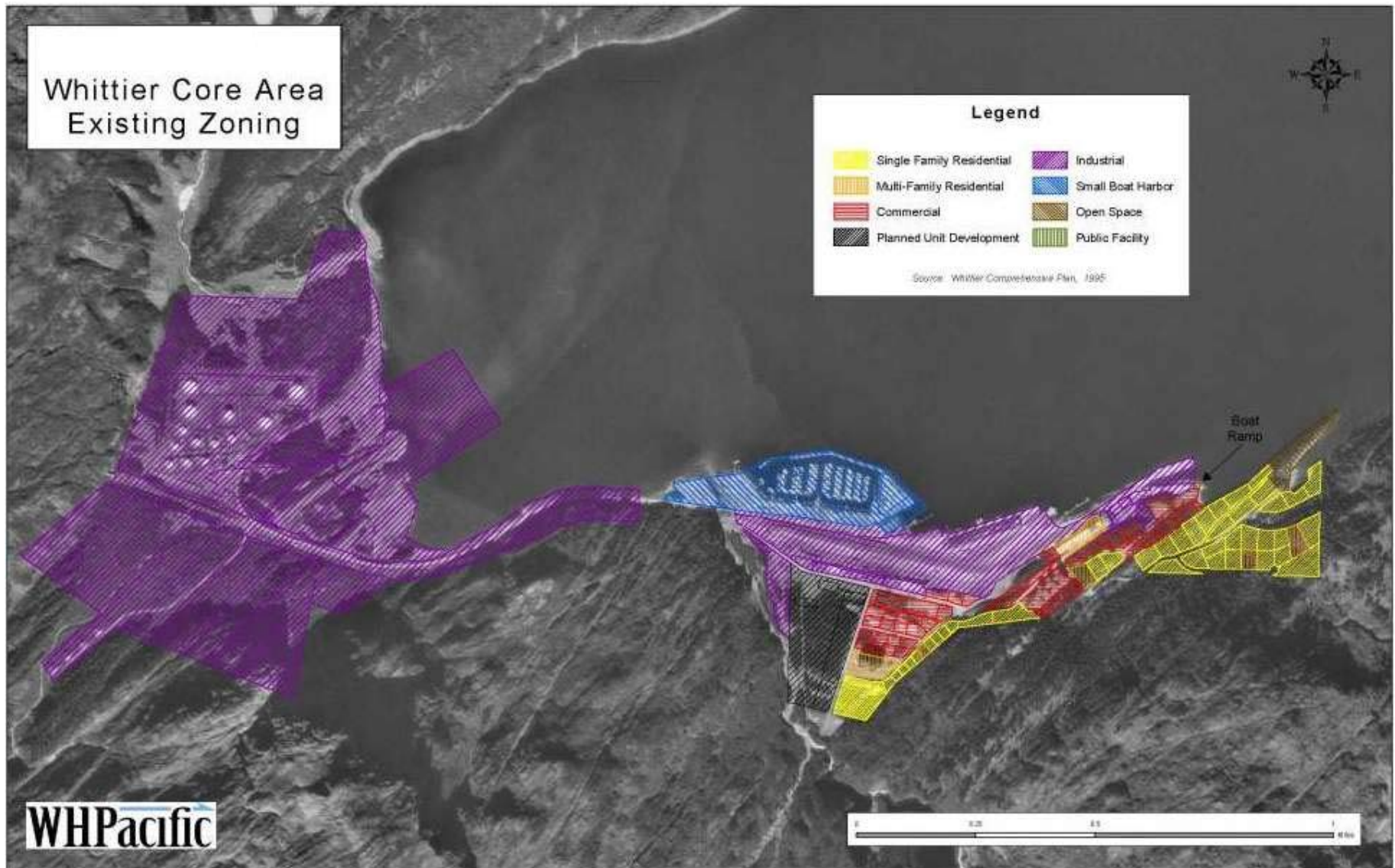
Alaska Statute 29.40.040 further requires, in part, that in accordance with a comprehensive plan and in order to implement the plan the City shall adopt zoning regulations restricting the use of land and improvements by geographic districts.

### Zoning Ordinance

The present zoning ordinance, adopted in October 1984, uses a multi-district zoning approach and has 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 dimensional requirement, such as minimum lot area, setbacks, building heights and number of parking spaces, are also identified as standards applying to each district. In addition, the ordinance identifies how it will be administered by the City, how nonconforming uses will be treated, the process and standard for determining variances, appeals and conditional uses, and how the City can amend it. Figure 7 shows the existing zoning.

The Whittier Coastal Management District has revised their program to meet the new regulations.

Figure 9: Existing zoning





## **Cooperative Agreements**

The City can use cooperative agreements or memorandums of understandings (MOUs) with one or more parties to help provide effective land management. In general, an agreement describes terms two or more parties agree to meet to help better provide a mutually beneficial service.

In 1998, the City signed a Ground Lease and Management Agreement with the Alaska Railroad Corporation. In the agreement, both parties recognized the importance of the ARRC land within the city core area. This land, estimated to be 46 percent of the usable land available in the city core, is vitally important to the City's future. The agreement recognizes this fact and sets forth conditions by which the City is given the authority to manage these lands and to provide the ARRC a percentage of any sublease payments.

The Ground Lease and Management Agreement also recognizes the need to develop a mutually acceptable Land Management Plan, or updated Whittier Comprehensive Plan. The Management Plan is intended to guide development of leases on the ARRC property. The Agreement states that should the City seek to sublease or develop a portion of the leased premises in a manner that does not conform to the Comprehensive Plan, the City must first consult with ARRC. Should the ARRC object to the proposed nonconforming development, the City shall not be allowed to proceed. The agreement is effective until November 12, 2033; two additional 35-year terms of extension are a part of the agreement, taking the duration of the agreement to November 12, 2108.

At present, the City uses other cooperative agreements or MOUs with the State and Federal government to manage public facilities and provide public services. An example of a multi-party cooperative agreement is one signed for 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 MOU was also signed between the City of Whittier, Chugach Alaska Corporation and several private businesses to do initial planning and future management and development of lands to the east of

the Whittier core area. The agreement focuses on lands in Shotgun Cove and development concerns such as the provision of sewer and water services.

The City should continue using cooperative agreements as a way of accomplishing desired projects and providing public services. This is particularly important in consideration of the new demands placed upon the City and its residents by visitation caused by improved road access.

## **Municipal Land Disposal Program**

One land management tool available to the City as a landowner is the use, lease and sale of its own lands. When the City was first formed, it purchased lands in the Whittier core area from the General Service Administration. The City retained ownership of some of the parcels it purchased, but it disposed of most. To raise monies for the newly incorporated City, it had a land sale, but this restricted its ability to better influence how development would occur. For example, most of the lands sold were never developed, and at present, the City owns very little land in the core area to meet future needs.

Since the initial land sale, the City has periodically had sales to dispose of small amounts of property it considered excess. The City has not prepared a long-term land sales program but it has examined the need for the lands to be sold. The City's receipt of 600 acres in the Emerald Bay and Shotgun Cove areas emphasizes the need for it to prepare a comprehensive land development and disposal program. Terms of the conveyance from the state require the City to dispose of all lands not needed for public purposes by 2014. This is an extension from the previous 2004 conveyance. This program should identify lands needed for present and future public needs (schools, roads, watersheds, etc.), and the best means for development and disposal of lands.

## **Land Leases**

An alternative to the sale of municipal lands is to lease them for purposes that meet public needs. The City may determine that an undeveloped parcel of municipal land may be used for a development activity for a period of years before it is needed for other purposes. Leasing, rather than disposing of lands, the City can generate revenue while retaining ownership through a lease.

An example of land that the City leases to businesses is the Triangle area with shops, charter companies,



restaurants and other businesses that lease City land and thereby bring revenue to the City.

While the City owns some small parcels in the Whittier core area that could be leased to a developer, the acreage that would be available for lease in Shotgun Cove and along the proposed road to Shotgun Cove would substantially increase the City's land available to be leased.

The City may also obtain advantage by leasing lands from other private and public parties.

### **Covenants**

Covenants are a common method municipalities use to maintain a degree of control of land uses after disposing of municipal lands through a land sale. Covenants are requirements, restrictions or limitations the City would place on lands by including them in the terms of the deed of sale. Covenants can be used with Whittier's present form of multi-district zoning, but the City should use them cautiously, as they are conditions on the deed and difficult to change or remove.

As an example, when the City disposes of its lands, it may want to attach covenants to the sale that limit the buyer from subdividing the land or require the buyer to build a house within a specified period of time. This would help prevent the holding of land for speculation without development or improvement. The hold of unimproved property which is in the core area and served by all utilities has contributed to the lack of single family housing in the community.

## Chapter Eight: Other plans and recommendations

Various government agencies and private entities, including but not limited to the Alaska Railroad Corporation, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, the National Wildlife Federation, the United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service and the USDA National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), have been working with the community to develop plans that include development in Whittier and its immediate vicinity. This chapter provides an overview of other planning documents that affect Whittier.

### City of Whittier, Alaska, Local Hazards Mitigation Plan, February 2008

The Whittier LHMP, adopted in 2008, describes natural hazards that threaten the community and potential actions to lessen or remove the impacts of these hazards. Identified hazards affecting Whittier include flood, wildland fire, earthquake, avalanche tsunami, severe weather, landslide, and erosion.

Community assets were identified and their vulnerability to each potential hazard was assessed. Whittier is a small community in a constrained space; therefore, most hazards impact the whole community to some degree.

Levee failure was identified as a threat, as well. The plan stated “The Whittier Creek Levee was constructed approximately 50 years ago. Over the course of time, the levee protection has eroded, and the stream channel has filled in, bringing into question the ability of the levee to provide protection to many key facilities in downtown Whittier.”

Any development or construction projects in Whittier should be screened against the LHMP to ascertain the vulnerability of the location under consideration and to see if mitigation actions are necessary to more safely develop the area.

Reviewed on a regular basis, the LHMP is scheduled for update in 2013.

### Sustainable Economic Development for the Prince William Sound Region, September 2005

This document was prepared for the National Wildlife Federation, Alaska Office, by Eco-Systems: Economic and Ecological Research in collaboration with the

Institute of Social and Economic Research (ISER) and the University of Alaska Anchorage. The purpose of the document is to assist Prince William Sound communities to “capture economic opportunities afforded by improved access while maintaining control over residents’ economic future and quality of life.”<sup>24</sup>

The goals of this project were to:

- Identify opportunities and challenges to diversify and grow the Prince William Sound economy while improving the quality of life for Prince William Sound residents and maintaining the exceptional natural environment.
- Help foster and strengthen partnerships for economic development.
- Consider new pathways to a prosperous economic future.

### Whittier Water System Master Plan, June 2005

The purpose of this study was to update the City’s Water System Master Plan that was completed in 1990.

The updated plan reviewed the City’s existing water system; gave an analysis of water system needs related to increased cruise ship dockings, tourism activities, and overall community growth and commercial expansion; reviewed water system needs for development at Head of Passage Canal and Shotgun Cove; discussed existing water source quality and treatment requirements; and analyzed alternative water well locations.

### Forest Service Planning Projects

The 5.5-million acre Chugach National Forest in Southcentral Alaska forms a great arc around Prince William Sound on the Gulf of Alaska. The Forest stretches more than 200 miles from southeast of Cordova to the eastern Kenai Peninsula. The diverse landscapes of the Forest include high altitude icefields, rugged mountain peaks, tidewater glaciers, and extensive wetlands.

<sup>24</sup> Fay, Ginny, et al. *Sustainable Economic Development for the Prince William Sound Region*, September 2005. Accessed online, January 5, 2012, [http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Regional/Alaska/PRCA\\_PWS-Sustainable-Economic-Development.ashx](http://www.nwf.org/~media/PDFs/Regional/Alaska/PRCA_PWS-Sustainable-Economic-Development.ashx)

The Chugach National Forest was created by presidential proclamation in 1892 as the Afognak Forest and Fish Culture Reserve. For more than a century, the Forest has provided outstanding fish and wildlife habitat and, more recently, world-class recreation and tourism opportunities. Fish, wildlife, and recreation/ tourism continue to be the major resources and uses of the Forest and represent its greatest potential for future management.

The Chugach National Forest is the second largest in the National Forest System and has three distinct geographic areas: the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and the Copper River Delta.

The Prince William Sound area encompasses 2,625,140 acres (48 percent of the Forest). It is an area of forested islands, intricate coastlines, and tidewater glaciers, with portions still recovering from the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill of 1989. Lands in the western portion were designated as the Nellie Juan-College Fjord Wilderness Study Area in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. The Glacier Ranger District where Whittier is located encompasses most of western Prince William Sound.

### **Chugach Forest Plan**

The first Chugach Forest Plan under the National Forest Management Act was completed in 1984. Revision of this plan was launched in 1997 with publication of a Notice of Intent in the Federal Register. More than 3,000 comments were received during this initial scoping.

The draft Environmental Impact Statement and Forest plan were released in September 2000 for public review and comment. During the revision effort, over 33,000 written comments were received and analyzed.

The Revised Land and Resource Management Plan may be viewed and downloaded from the following interactive websites.

### **Chugach National Forest Homepage:**

[http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/forest\\_plan/plan\\_docs1.html](http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/chugach/forest_plan/plan_docs1.html)

### **Forest Plan Interactive website:**

The 2002 revision of the Chugach National Forest *Revised Resources and Management Plan* may be accessed at:

[http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE\\_DOCUMENTS/fs8\\_028736.pdf](http://www.fs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/fs8_028736.pdf)

The following excerpts from the *Revised Resources and Management Plan* provide a sampling of the plan's direction regarding the Whittier area.

*"Recreation and Tourism* Recreation and tourism in Prince William Sound will be focused on the summer months with little activity during the winter. Within the radius of a day use zone from Whittier, along the east side of the Sound and near the community of Chenega Bay, small dispersed recreation developments will exist to accommodate increased recreation activity" p. 3-17.

"Emphasize wilderness values in western Prince William Sound. Provide recreation opportunities near Whittier to address projected increased recreation demand" p.A-2.

Public comments are reported as saying:

"A majority of respondents in 8 of the 12 communities (excepting Anchorage, Kenai, Soldotna, and Sterling) indicate that the proper Forest response to increased use of Prince William Sound due to the new Whittier Road is to develop minimal new facilities to mitigate impacts rather than more facilities to enhance use.

"Whittier, Anchorage, Cordova, Valdez and Girdwood each had a majority of respondents favoring an increase in the tourism services sector, while all other communities had a majority of respondents favoring no change in this sector in their community" p.B-12.

### **Prince William Sound Human Use Study**

The Prince William Sound (PWS) Framework is the Chugach National Forest's (CNF) comprehensive effort to evaluate recreation in Prince William Sound. The project took place during the years from 2009 through 2011.

In the twenty years since the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS), Prince William Sound has experienced numerous changes. The spill itself impacted and disrupted resources and human services in the Sound, but over the past decade the Sound has experienced increased human use activity, as well. With the opening of the Whittier Tunnel and the introduction of high speed ferry service, access to the Sound by independent and commercial users has increased. There is growing concern that increased competition and rapid growth in users may be threatening

resources and services – particularly those injured and still “recovering” from EVOS.<sup>25</sup>

Goals of this Framework include:

- Determine the level and distribution of human use in the Sound associated with recreation, tourism, and subsistence activities.
- Ensure increasing recreation and tourism use does not adversely impact sensitive resources, including resources and services still recovering from the Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS).
- Identify strategies to manage for and support sustainable human use into the future.

### Whittier Creek Watershed Council, 2004

A watershed council for the Whittier Creek Watershed was formed in April 2004. This Council is comprised of people who live or own land within the Whittier Creek Watershed boundaries and is assisted by technical and facilitation support from the USDA NRCS and other State and Federal entities. A comprehensive watershed plan for Whittier Creek is currently being developed

The biggest concern with the watershed is the dike that protects the city from flooding. Upon the completion of a watershed plan for Whittier Creek, the Whittier Comprehensive Plan in its completion should flex to accommodate the watershed plan. The watershed plan should guide development and other activities in Whittier to protect the long-term environmental integrity within the watershed boundaries.

### Alaska Railroad Master Plan for Whittier

The rail yard is used to the limits of its capacity with freight and passengers train operations. Use of any of the tracks for passenger operations could only occur on days when no freight operations are planned. The rail yard is often used to store south-bound freight cars prior to barge arrival and off loading. When barges arrive, cars are unloaded onto tracks in the rail yard, then the waiting cars can be loaded for transport south. Additional land serves as a staging area where flat cars are unloaded and containers are stacked prior to being loaded onto barges for transport out of Alaska.

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 railroad yards is allowed only located near the Whittier Creek Bridge. When the train switching operation occurs, trains occupy the Whittier Creek Bridge and traffic trying to enter or exit Whittier Street must wait. There is no alternative vehicular access across the railroad operations area, although a pedestrian underpass was constructed in 2001 that connects the residential part of Whittier with the waterfront. The 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.

### State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

#### Prince Williams Sound Transportation Plan, July 2001

The key element of the Prince William Sound (PWS) Transportation Plan was the purchase of two new high-speed ferries, (one immediately and the second several years later), which would be deployed to serve Cordova, Whittier and Valdez with much greater frequency, capacity, and convenience than are now provided. The plan achieved these transportation service objectives without adding to present system operating costs, while dramatically improving transportation revenues. Under this proposal, the *Bartlett* and the *Tustumena* would no longer provide service within Prince William Sound. The *Tustumena* would continue to provide service between the Kenai Peninsula and Southwest Alaska. The plan was arrived at through an iterative process that considered all transportation modes, eventually narrowing its focus to marine transportation. In the final analysis, the current system configuration (Final Alternative 1) was compared with three new ferry system concepts (Final Alternatives 2, 3 and 4). Final Alternative 3 (hence referred to as the "Preferred Alternative") outperformed the other concepts.

The (PWS) Transportation Plan, begun in May 1997, focuses on linking communities within the region to each other, to the rest of the state and to outside the state. The PWS area historically has provided two natural gateways to Alaska's interior via Thompson Pass near Valdez and via the Copper River valley.

<sup>25</sup> USDA Forest Service Planning website. Accessed January 5, 2012. <http://www.fs.usda.gov>



Completion of the Whittier Access Project, which provides direct auto and rail access from Anchorage to Whittier, further strengthens the region's gateway role. While the PWS area possesses tremendous strengths, chief among which are its beauty and natural resources, it also faces numerous transportation challenges.

There exist significant differences in mobility and access among the region's communities. Seward, for example, has direct connections to highway, air, rail, and the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). On the other hand, Cordova, Chenega Bay and Tatitlek are wholly dependent on AMHS and air travel. This reliance is problematic in several respects. First, residents of communities with no overland access pay higher costs for goods and for travel.

Second, existing AMHS service upon which these residents are reliant is infrequent, irregularly scheduled, insufficient to meet demand during the summer peak, and inconvenient (e.g., midnight arrivals and departures). Third, the lack of access and mobility is a barrier to economic diversification.

Constraints upon the provision of lower-cost, more convenient, faster transportation alternatives include the area's challenging weather and topography, the predominance of State and Federal land ownership, the importance of conserving subsistence resources, and the value of preserving the area's natural resources.

### **Proposed Plan Elements:**

**AMHS Improvements - The Preferred Alternative.** In the Preferred Alternative, the State would initially purchase a new 32-knot, 30-vehicle highspeed ferry similar to the "Sitka class" vessel developed for Southeast Alaska service. This vessel, homeported in Cordova, would make alternating loops (one round trip per day) among the ports of Cordova, Valdez and Whittier year-round. A second identical vessel would be added 6-10 years into the plan's life. It would be homeported in Valdez and dedicated in peak season.

The entire Prince Williams Sound Transportation Plan may be viewed at the following website:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/areaplans/pwsplan.shtml>

### **Statewide Transportation Improvement Program, STIP, FY 2010 - 2013**

The federal-aid eligible portion of Whittier Tunnel Maintenance and Operations are funded in the current

STIP, with \$2,253,300 slated for 2011, \$2,343,500 in 2012 and \$2,437,200 in 2013.

### **Whittier Airport Master Plan, 2003**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF), in conjunction with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), has undertaken a project to evaluate the need for, and feasibility of, replacing the existing Whittier airport with a new "emergency use only" airport in the western Prince William Sound region near Portage Pass.

In August of 1998, ADOT&PF received a resolution from the City of Whittier asking to review, under public comment, the necessity of retaining airport facilities in Whittier under current capabilities. Hearings were held by ADOT&PF in Whittier and Anchorage during October of 1998 to take public testimony. The results of the hearings concluded that although the airport is no longer important in providing access and services to the community, it continues to serve an important role in the safety of the regional airport system, especially for aircraft operating between Prince William Sound and the Anchorage bowl. The ability of the existing airport to continue functioning in this role is in jeopardy given the facility's design deficiencies, topographic challenges, questionable eligibility for FAA funding, and pressure for the development of adjacent lands.

The purpose of the airport master plan is to further evaluate the need for, and feasibility of, replacing the existing Whittier airport with a new 'emergency use only' airport in the Western Prince William Sound near Portage Pass. If it is determined that a new "emergency use only" airport is not needed, the Whittier airport would be closed.

If it is determined that a new "emergency use only" airport is needed, the location and design standards to which the airport would be constructed would be determined through negotiation between ADOT&PF and FAA.

The Airport Master Plan project would consist of three phases:

**Phase I: Preferred Alternative Identification.** This phase includes a condition and needs assessment, public input and involvement, and alternative development analysis.

Phase II: Draft Master Plan and Environmental Assessment. Selection of the preferred alternative and a more detailed analysis of the environmental impacts associated with development options will occur during the project's second phase.

Phase III: Final Master Plan. The final phase incorporates comments on all documents and drawings into a final airport master plan submitted for FAA approval.

A briefing paper was prepared in 2003, which is a component of the first Phase. The briefing memorandum provides an overview of community characteristics, airport conditions, existing design standards, and forecasted demand.

Additionally a subsequent memorandum, Alternatives Development and Analysis, was prepared which consists of a demand capacity analysis and the development of potential alternatives.

The master plan was halted at the end of the scoping phase and has not moved forward yet, as of fall 2005.

### **City of Whittier Indirect Effects Planning Assistance Coordination and Implementation Planning – Final Short-term Critical Needs, 1998**

This plan was prepared to assess the impact of improving access to the City of Whittier with the opening of highway through the Whittier Tunnel. Visitation to Whittier was expected to increase substantially. To deal with the expected increase in visitors, the City of Whittier, the ADOT & PF, and the ARRC embarked upon a planning process to identify capital improvements in Whittier and agency actions necessary to handle the influx. This plan purpose was to provide the means for coordinating agency planning efforts with the ultimate objective of integrating the identified capital needs and corresponding agency actions for implementation in Whittier. The planning effort was initiated through a cooperative effort of the ADOT&PF, the ARRC, and the City of Whittier.

### **City of Whittier Redevelopment and Urban Design Plan, 1994**

This largely unimplemented document was written by International Tourism and Resort Advisors (INTRA) to assist Whittier to capitalize on the opportunities afforded by increased access when the tunnel would be converted for vehicular use. The plan addresses the potential impacts on Whittier's core area from

increased access and describes methods that the City can use to encourage private business investment in Whittier.

### **Alaska Coastal Management Program, 1988**

The Whittier Coastal Management Plan (CMP) was written in 1988 and became effective in 1990. In May 2003, the Alaska State Legislature passed House Bill 191, which states in part that all coastal management district plans must be revised to meet certain criteria. In general, the revised district plans and enforceable policies must be revised to clearly show a connection between coastal resources and the policies.

To Comply with Alaska Statute (AS) 46.40, as amended by HB 191 (May 2003) the district plan and enforceable policies must meet the following criteria:

- Must meet the statewide standards and district plan criteria adopted under AS 46.40.040 (the new regulations)
- May not duplicate, restate, or incorporate by reference statutes and administrative regulations adopted by state or federal agencies (AS 46.40.030 (b))
- Must be clear and concise as to the activities and persons affected by the policies, and the requirements of the policies; (AS 46.40.070 (a) (2)(A))
- Must use precise, prescriptive, and enforceable language (AS 46.40.070 (a) (2)(B))
- May not address a matter regulated or authorized by state or federal law unless the enforceable policies relate specifically to a matter of local concern (AS 46.40.070 (a) (2)(C))
- Must be changed to reflect the changes to consistency review for activities subject to Department of Environmental Conservation permits, certifications, approvals and authorizations (AS 46.40.040 (b) and AS 46.40.096)
- Should be changed because the determination of the scope of a consistency review is affected by whether an activity is the subject of a district enforceable policy (AS 46.40.096(k))

The CMP sunsets if it is not revised and approved by DNR by March 1, 2007 (HB 191, Transition, Sections 46 and 47)

- Districts have 1 year after adoption of new regulations or until July 1, 2005 to submit a revised plan to DNR, whichever is later
- Existing district plan enforceable policies remain in effect until July 1, 2006, unless new ones are adopted by DNR.

The Whittier coastal district plans, at this time to retain and revise 26 policies, delete 69 policies and create at least one new area of local concern.

The resource inventory will require the producing approximately 20 maps (some of which can be combined) depicting areas and activities that relate to the enforceable policies. Accompanying narrative information and scientific evidence will also be written.

A resource analysis chapter will be written to analyze impacts of activities on coastal resources. The implementation, subject uses and proper and improper uses chapter need to be revised to meet the new requirements under 11 AAC 114.

There are no anticipated changes to the boundary of the Whittier Coastal District. The issues, goals and objectives, subject uses, proper and improper uses and implementation chapters will be rewritten during the plan amendment.

The Whittier Coastal District is on track to revise their CMP during State Fiscal Year 2005/06 and will meet the state deadline to remain in the program.



## Chapter Nine: Community Goals, Policies and Actions

This chapter presents guidelines that the City and other landowners or developers can use to assist them with decision-making and long-range planning. The goals, policies, and implementation actions were developed through the public involvement process and were based on public suggestions, previous plans, and other community and consultant input. The goals, actions and policies were reviewed and updated using information gathered at a public meeting January 27, 2012. All goals, policies, and actions were reviewed and approved by the City Planning and Zoning Commission.

- Goals are general achievements that the community wishes to accomplish. Goals provide guidance for developing policies.
- Policies set the course of action that the City will take.
- Actions are task-oriented events that lead to implementation of goals and policies.

In the January 27, 2012 public meeting, participants were asked to rank their top three priorities overall, as well as their top priorities for each goal. This ranking process is the primary basis for the prioritization levels in the following table.

The rankings also reflect the City Council's annual identification of Whittier's main legislative priorities. For 2012, the top priorities identified were:

- Continued construction of Shotgun Cove Road;

- Whittier navigation improvements/Watershed study;
- Repair of the levee above the Whittier Core Area;
- Replacement of the public works/public safety building; and
- Water and wastewater system upgrades.

Additional criteria shaping the rankings included feasibility, fundability, and whether the project is necessary for continued safe city operations. High priority projects are those that the City plans to begin or achieve in the next five years; medium priority projects five to ten years, and low priority projects ten to twenty years. Actions labeled "ongoing" are those that do not conform to a timetable but must be pursued as opportunities arise.

Whittier's goals, policies, and actions were divided into seven general categories:

- Transportation
- Facilities
- Municipal Government
- Land Use
- Recreation
- Appearance
- Economy

The following pages detail the specific goals, policies, and actions developed during the planning process.

## Transportation

	Description	Priority Ranking	Project Status
<b>Goal 1</b>	<b>Expand and improve access into and transportation facilities within Whittier.</b>		
<b>Policy 1.1</b>	<b>Improve the Small Boat Harbor and water access to Whittier.</b>	<b>High</b>	
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.	High	
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.	Medium	
Action 1.1.3	Pursue expanded and improved Alaska Marine Highway (AMHS) service to Whittier.	Low	
Action 1.1.4	Improve navigation in Passage Canal.	High	Identified as a capital budget priority for 2012 in City of Whittier Resolution 995-11.
<b>Policy 1.2</b>	<b>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.</b>		
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.	High	Identified as a capital budget priority for 2012 in City of Whittier Resolution 995-11.
Action 1.2.2	Submit local road projects to the Alaska Department of Transportation (ADOT) Statewide Transportation Improvement Program.	High	
Action 1.2.3	Explore the possibility of the RS2477 route over Portage Pass.	Low	
Action 1.2.4	Continue to seek funding to complete a road toward Decision Point State Marine Park.	High	
Action 1.2.5	Provide shuttle service within Whittier.	Medium	
Action 1.2.6	Provide shuttle service between Portage and Whittier.	Medium	

<b>Policy 1.3</b>	<b>Improve pedestrian circulation within Whittier's core area.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
Action 1.3.1	Improve pedestrian crossing at Whittier Creek.	Medium	
Action 1.3.2	Integrate ADA compliant pedestrian trails and/or sidewalks with ongoing highway improvements.	Medium	
<b>Policy 1.4</b>	<b>Provide adequate and convenient residential and transient parking.</b>		
Action 1.4.1	Develop a multi-level parking facility that could also serve as boat storage in the off-season.	Low	
Action 1.4.2	Construct paved parking lots.	Low	
<b>Policy 1.5</b>	<b>Develop plans for improved transportation within Whittier.</b>		
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.	High	
Action 1.5.2	Develop a parking plan with recommendations for walkway, street crossing, and beach access as well as shared parking where feasible.	Medium	
<b>Policy: 1.6</b>	<b>Expand vehicular tunnel access to Whittier.</b>		
Action 1.6.1	Improve tunnel access into Whittier by increasing the hours of operations in both summer and winter.	Medium	Tunnel hours have been extended, particularly in winter.
Action 1.6.2	Promote the construction of a new tunnel facility.	Low	
<b>Policy 1.7</b>	<b>Pursue continued and improved air access to Whittier.</b>		
Action 1.7.1	Coordinate with the State of Alaska and the FAA to secure funding for improved airport facilities and infrastructure.	Medium	
Action 1.7.2	Promote the design and construction of a helicopter pad to serve the Whittier community.	Medium	



<b>Policy 1.8</b>	<b>Improve quality of road system for sustainability.</b>		
Action 1.8.1	Institute a program to rebuild the roads to appropriate standards.	Medium	
Action 1.8.2	Develop programs to pave gravel streets and reduce erosion areas.	Medium	

## Facilities

<b>Goal 2.</b>	<b>Expand and improve facilities to meet current and future needs in Whittier.</b>		
<b>Policy 2.1</b>	<b>Improve public buildings and services.</b>		
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.	High	
Action 2.1.2	Research funding opportunities to repair or replace the public works facility.	High	Identified as a capital budget priority for 2012 in City of Whittier Resolution 995-11.
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.	High	
Action 2.1.4	Provide modern, maintained public restrooms and shower facilities.	Low	
Action 2.1.5	Establish a major maintenance and repair fund and a major equipment fund for replacement of public works equipment when necessary.	Medium	
<b>Policy 2.2</b>	<b>Improve the quality and availability of emergency medical services in Whittier.</b>		
Action 2.2.1	Provide in the City budget for financial support for emergency medical services and physician sponsorship of EMS.	High	
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.	Medium	

Action 2.2.3	Document and publicize the importance of Whittier as an emergency medical center for western Prince William Sound.	Low	
Action 2.2.4	Support the efforts of agencies responding to waterborne emergencies.	Ongoing	
<b>Policy 2.3</b>	<b>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.</b>		
Action 2.3.1	Create favorable conditions to encourage agencies and vendors to provide scheduled specialized health and social services in Whittier.	High	
Action 2.3.2	Encourage retrofitting historical buildings for ADA compliance.	High	New action - 2012
<b>Policy 2.4</b>	<b>Provide safe and adequate public facilities and utilities to support existing needs, seasonal population fluctuation, and community growth.</b>		
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.	Medium	
Action 2.4.2	Repair and expand the existing sewer and water systems as needed.	High	Identified as a capital budget priority for 2012 in City of Whittier Resolution 995-11.
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.	Low	
Action 2.4.4	Develop and implement a storm drain management plan.	Medium	
Action 2.4.5	Explore and encourage the use of alternative energy sources.	Medium	
Action 2.4.6	Research solid waste alternatives and develop and implement a solid waste management plan.	Low	
Action 2.4.7	Encourage additional internet/cable providers to serve Whittier's residents.	Ongoing	

## Municipal Government

<b>Goal 3</b>	<b>The municipal government will serve its citizens through a strategy of responsible stewardship of its environmental, economic and human resources.</b>	<b>Medium</b>	
<b>Policy 3.1</b>	<b>Expand the local government corporate boundary.</b>		
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.	Medium	
<b>Policy 3.2</b>	<b>Improve relations between city government and businesses for the economic and social welfare of the community.</b>		
Action 3.2.1	Develop a strategy to foster a team/cooperative spirit between city officials, business owners and the public.	High	
<b>Policy 3.3</b>	<b>Research methods to generate revenue other than taxes to pay for services and facilities.</b>		
Action 3.3.1	Pursue bonds, local improvement districts, grants and Capital Improvement Program projects.	High	
Action 3.3.2	Attend statewide meetings to stay involved with other agencies.	High	
Action 3.3.3	Examine alternative means of service delivery, such as privatization of services and contracting existing city services.	Medium	
<b>Policy 3.4</b>	<b>Protect and enhance the natural features, environment, and scenic beauty of the area around Whittier.</b>		
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.	High	
Action 3.4.2	Coordinate with state and federal agencies for environmental protection and permitting.	Medium	



Action 3.4.3	Develop a checklist of agencies and resources to provide guidance for responsible development.	Medium	
<b>Policy 3.5</b>	<b>Coordinate hazard mitigation and response in Whittier.</b>		
Action 3.5.1	Train local personnel and provide equipment in Whittier to control and respond to life threatening industrial accidents.	Medium	
Action 3.5.2	Develop a schedule to review and update and practice emergency evacuation plan for Whittier area.	Ongoing	
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.		Completed
Action 3.5.4	Develop a plan to deal with potential hazards such as fire, earthquake, flood, hazardous material spills, etc.		Completed
Action 3.5.5	Develop web-based GIS and provide for public viewing of security cameras throughout the community.	Medium	New – 2012
Action 3.5.6	Repair levee above Whittier Core Area.	High	New – 2012. Identified as a capital budget priority for 2012 in City of Whittier Resolution 995-11.
Action 3.5.7	Review and update Hazard Mitigation Plan according to schedule.	Ongoing	New – 2012
<b>Policy 3.6</b>	<b>Support recreational opportunities by providing local governmental assistance.</b>		
Action 3.6.1	Develop a land use plan for parks and trails.	Medium	
Action 3.6.2	Provide support for agencies and groups for pass through grants.	Medium	
Action 3.6.3	Review and upgrade the recreational area map and designate use areas.	Medium	Initial map created.
Action 3.6.4	Establish a volunteer and community work service program to provide recreational enhancement labor.	Ongoing	

## Land Use

<b>Goal 4</b>	<b>Guide the Use of Land in a Manner that Provides for Orderly and Efficient Community Growth.</b>		
<b>Policy 4.1</b>	<b>Develop a land use plan for the head of Passage Canal</b>		
Action 4.1.1	Pursue grant funding for economic development planning, programming and feasibility.	Ongoing	
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.	High	
<b>Policy 4.2</b>	<b>Update the core area land use plan.</b>		
Action 4.2.1	Determine the appropriate land use for properties in the core area.	High	
Action 4.2.2	Identify City owned properties and designate uses in a City Land Use Plan.	Medium	
<b>Policy 4.3:</b>	<b>Develop a land use plan for Shotgun Cove.</b>		
Action 4.3.1	Pursue economic development grant funding for economic development feasibility study.	Ongoing	
Action 4.3.2	Prepare an economic development feasibility study for Shotgun Cove development.	Medium	
Action 4.3.3	Zone available areas for land development.	Medium	
Action 4.3.4	Finish Phase II & III of Shotgun Cove Road to facilitate future growth in the area.	High	
<b>Policy 4.4:</b>	<b>Ensure that the public has access to designated public use land and beach areas.</b>		
Action 4.4.1	Plat rights of way and easements to the water.	Medium	
Action 4.4.2	Designate and provide ADA compliant access to areas for public use.	High	
Action 4.4.3	Designate potential recreational sites in the Passage Canal area.	Medium	

<b>Policy 4.5:</b>	<b>Provide land for use by the private sector.</b>		
Action 4.5.1	Coordinate with state and federal agencies to facilitate the construction of affordable residences.	High	
Action 4.5.2	Encourages the State Department of Natural Resources to dispose of State lands in Passage Canal that are suitable for private development.	Medium	
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.	Medium	
Action 4.5.4	Explore opportunities to acquire publicly held lands for development by City of Whittier or for private development.	Medium	
<b>Policy 4.6</b>	<b>Develop a strategy for the tank farm.</b>		
Action 4.6.1	Acquire the tank farm property.	High	
Action 4.6.2	Develop a land use plan for the tank farm property.	High	
<b>Policy 4.7</b>	<b>Ensure land use practices are consistent with responsible watershed management.</b>		
Action 4.7.1	Develop a watershed study.	High	Identified as a capital budget priority for 2012 in City of Whittier Resolution 995-11.



## Recreation

<b>Goal 5</b>	<b>Create recreational opportunities and activities for residents and visitors.</b>		
<b>Policy 5.1</b>	<b>Increase recreational facilities for residents and visitors of all ages.</b>		
Action 5.1.1	<p>Improve Whittier's trail system using but not limited to the following means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Work with relevant state and federal agencies to identify and sign hiking trails in Whittier;</li> <li>* Improve trailhead and kayak launching facilities at the end of the second segment of the Shotgun Cove Road project;</li> <li>* Improve Lu Young Park recreational facilities;</li> <li>* Create more hiking, skiing, snowboarding, and snow machine trails;</li> <li>* Install a tow rope at the Whittier Creek waterfall to facilitate skiing; and</li> <li>* Connect existing trails.</li> </ul>	High	
Action 5.1.2	<p>Work to provide increased marine recreational facilities and activities including but not limited to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Establish a kayak launch area and ramp;</li> <li>* Construct an ADA accessible creek- and salmon-viewing platform at Shakespeare Creek;</li> <li>* Designate fishing areas for non-boaters</li> </ul>	Medium	
Action 5.1.3	<p>Seek funding for and construct an indoor recreation facility and adjoining park area to include but not be limited to the following facilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Community swimming pool;</li> <li>* Sports and recreation facility</li> <li>* Ice skating rink:</li> </ul>	Low	
Action 5.1.4	Set aside areas to provide for recreation use.	High	
Action 5.1.5	Work with state and federal agencies to assist in constructing the Shotgun Cove small boat harbor.	Medium	
Action 5.1.6	Promote Whittier as a shore-based recreational center for hiking, camping, berry picking and sightseeing.	Medium	
Action 5.1.7	Encourage the development of camping and day-use facilities.	Ongoing	

Action 5.1.8	Pursue funding to design and construct a youth center for Whittier residents.	Medium	
Action 5.1.9	Promote winter activities in the Whittier area.	Ongoing	
<b>Policy 5.2</b>	<b>Promote regional recreational events and competitions.</b>		
Action 5.2.1	Coordinate with various groups to encourage events in Whittier.	Ongoing	
Action 5.2.2	Encourage guided walking tours and facilities for self-guided tours.	Ongoing	

## Appearance

<b>Goal 6</b>	<b>Capitalize on Whittier's Natural Beauty and Visual Appeal.</b>		
<b>Policy 6.1</b>	<b>Encourage coordinated clean up and enhancement projects.</b>		
Action 6.1.1	Develop and implement a plan to require new construction to include beautification elements.	Medium	
Action 6.1.2	Enhance downtown boardwalk system, especially along the waterfront.	Ongoing	
Action 6.1.3	Install interpretive and informational signs to enhance visitors' experience in Whittier.	Medium	
Action 6.1.4	Promote annual community clean-up kick-off days and on-going clean-up efforts.	High	
Action 6.1.5	Create architectural standards.	Medium	
Action 6.1.6	Continue to pursue a solution to derelict structures such as the Buckner Building and USFS Building (near Anchor Inn).	Low	

<b>Policy 6.2:</b>	<b>Research grants for art and other aesthetic improvement projects.</b>		
Action 6.2.1	Provide support to agencies and groups for pass through grants.	Ongoing	
Action 6.2.2	Research and apply for grants.	Ongoing	
Action 6.2.2	Research incentive programs for landscaping and beautification projects.	Ongoing	
Action 6.2.3	Encourage recycling efforts throughout the community.	Ongoing	

## Economy

<b>Goal 7.</b>	<b>Create Economic Opportunities for Residents and Businesses throughout the Whittier community.</b>		
<b>Policy 7.1</b>	<b>Establish a strategy for local hire.</b>		
Action 7.1.1	Promote the utilization of local residents to the maximum extent possible for local jobs.	Ongoing	
<b>Policy 7.2</b>	<b>Capitalize on the economic potential of increased tourism.</b>		
Action 7.2.1	Create a tourist information center.	Medium	
Action 7.2.2	Promote growth of small business tourist industry.	High	
Action 7.2.3	Foster a friendly and inviting attitude towards visitors.	Ongoing	
<b>Policy 7.3</b>	<b>Research strategies for attracting new commercial developments.</b>		
Action 7.3.1	Work with the private sector in attracting more businesses to Whittier.	High	
Action 7.3.2	Pursue obtaining economic development grants from the state and federal governments.	Ongoing	

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