



Whittier Moves Transportation Master Plan

TAC Meeting No. 1

SEPTEMBER 2025

Agenda



- ① **Planning Team Introductions**
- ② **Tunnel/Traffic Data Overview**
- ③ **TAC Introductions**
- ④ **Master Plan Overview**
- ⑤ **What We Have Heard**
- ⑥ **Project Development and Prioritization Method Overview**
- ⑦ **Group Prioritization Activity**



Planning Team Introductions



Scott Maybrier, Project Manager

Judy Chapman, Planning Lead



Jackie Wilde, City Manager

Adison Spafford, Assistant City Manager



Renee Whitesell, PTP, Project Manager

Kendal Ramage, Transportation Planner

Talli Vittetoe, Public Involvement



Pat Cotter, AICP, Senior Planner

Maija DiSalvo, Staff Planner

Let's Get to Know You

Please share the following:

- Your Name
- Your Role
- Your Interest in Whittier's Transportation System



Your Role as a Technical Advisory Committee Member

- Represent a broad cross section of local and regional transportation industry stakeholders
- Provide technical guidance and feedback on various analyses and work products developed for Whittier Moves
- Support the transition of recommended projects from planning into design and construction following the finalization of Whittier Moves

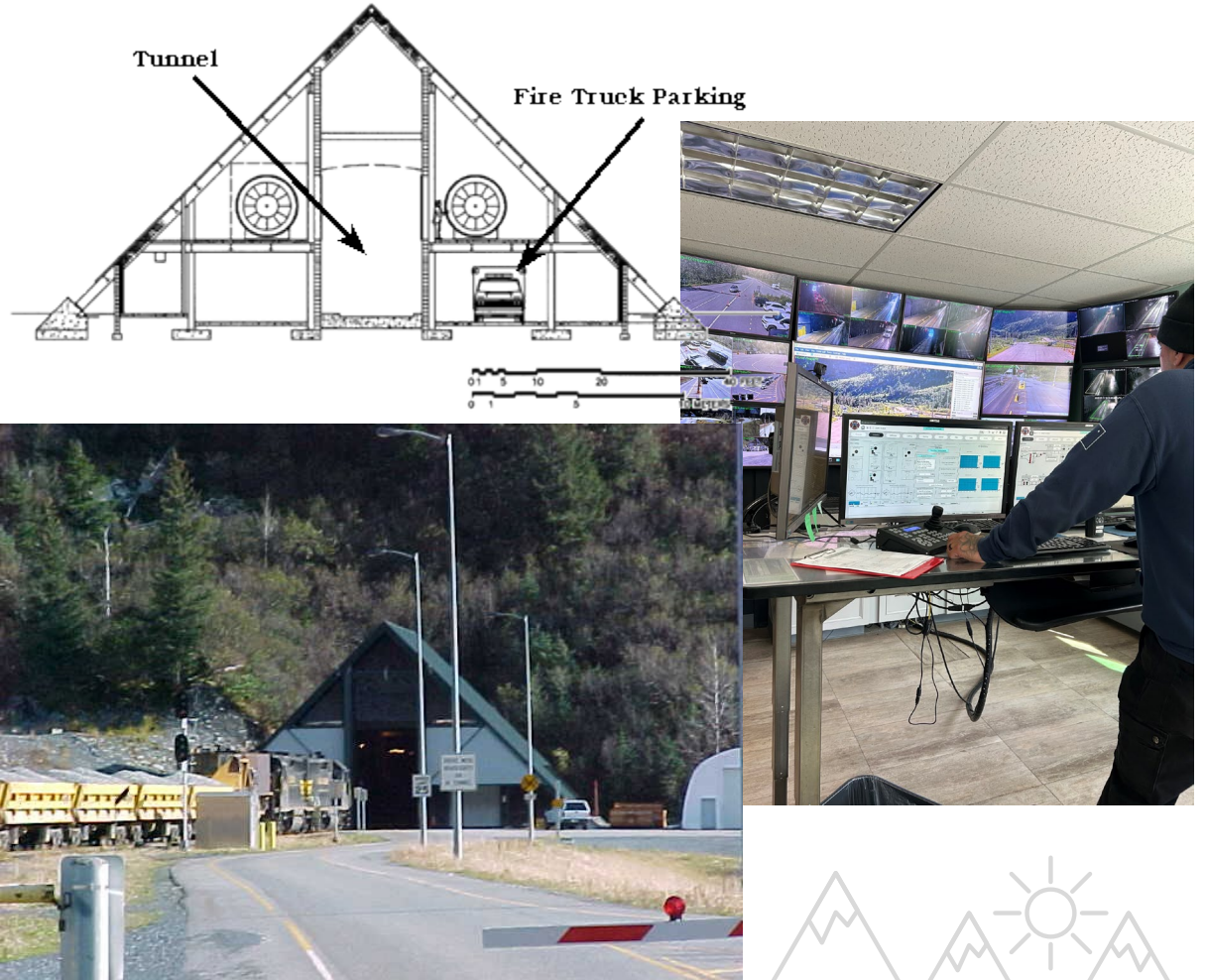


Tunnel Presentation

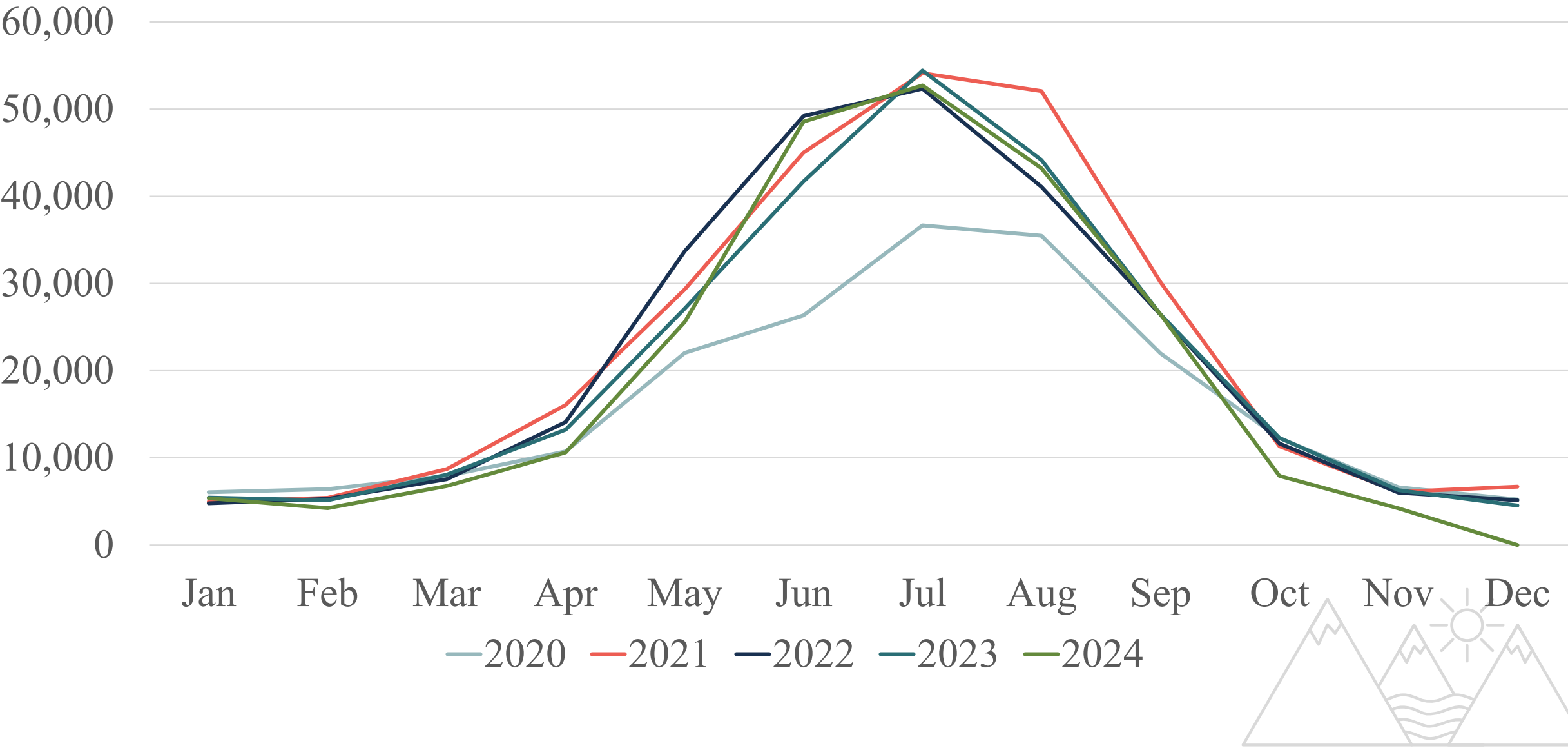


Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel

- Longest highway and longest combined rail and highway use tunnel in North America at 13,300 ft / 2.5 miles
- First U.S. tunnel with jet turbine and portal fan ventilation
- First computerized regulation of both rail and highway traffic
- First tunnel designed for -40°F . and 150 mph winds
- Portal buildings are designed to withstand avalanches



Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel Traffic Volumes per Year by Month 2020-2024



Whittier Moves Overview



What is Transportation Master Planning?



Transportation Master Planning is...

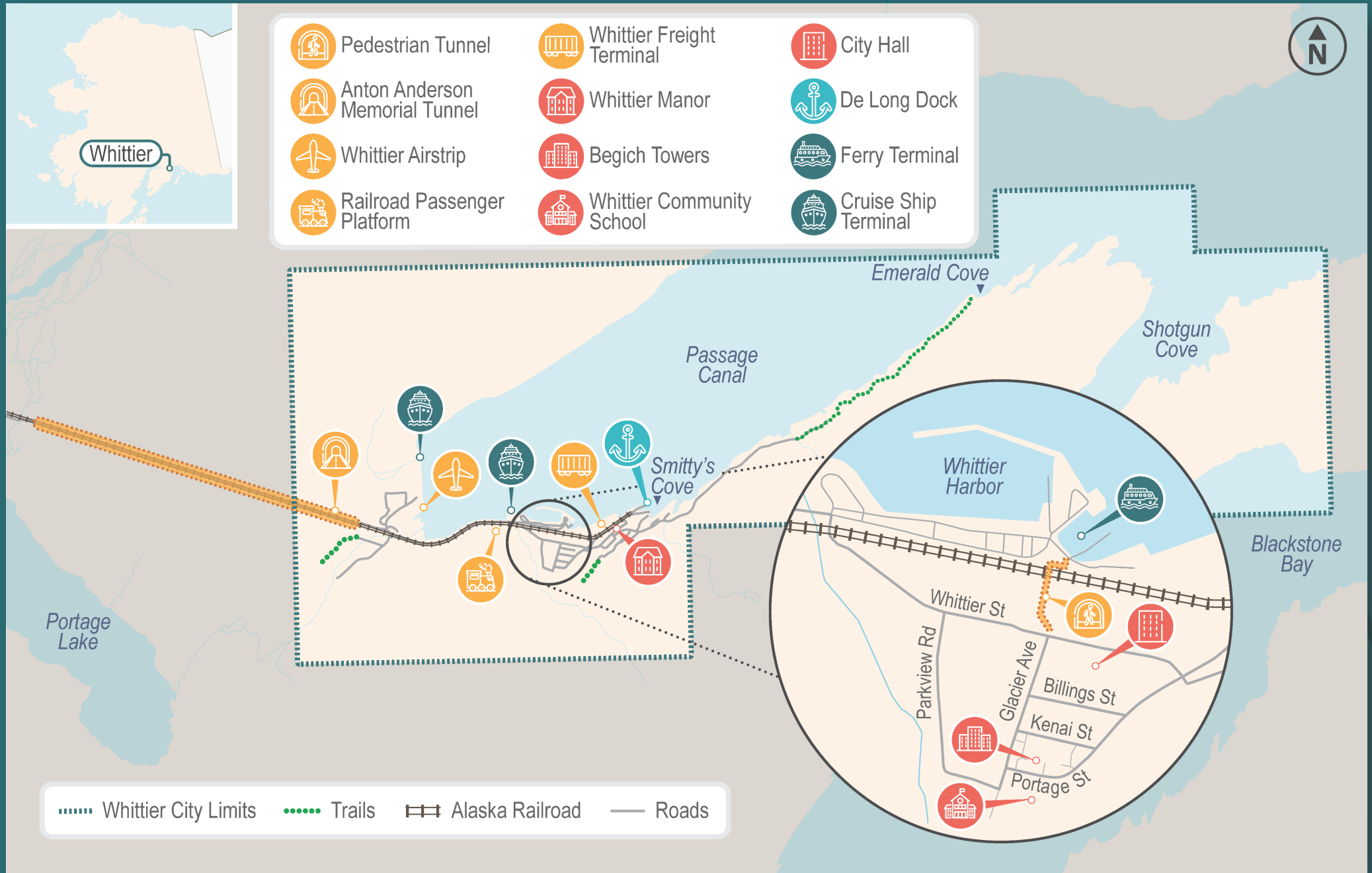
- A **long-term vision** for how a community's transportation system should grow and improve.
- A process that **gathers input** from residents, businesses, and stakeholders.
- A way to **identify priorities** (safety, access, connectivity, economic growth, environmental concerns).
- A **coordinated framework** that guides future funding, design, and policy decisions.
- A tool to **balance needs** for all users: drivers, pedestrians, cyclists, transit, freight.
- A plan that can **be updated** based on community input and needs.

Transportation Master Planning is not...

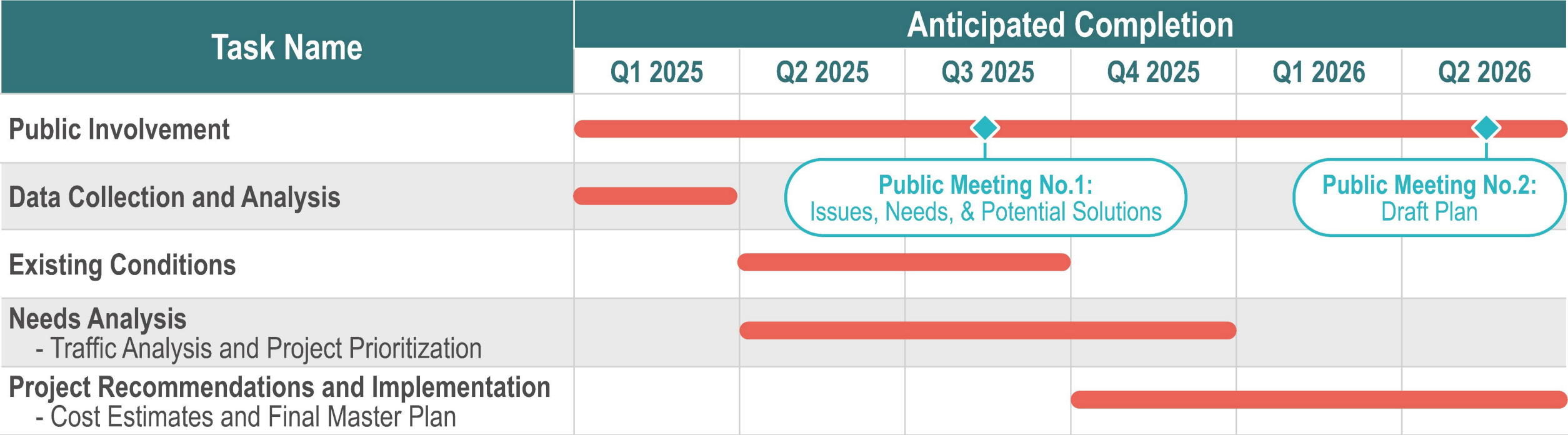
- A **construction plan** with specific projects ready to build right away.
- A plan created **behind closed doors** without community involvement.
- A guarantee that **every idea or project** will be funded and built.
- A **short-term “to-do list”** for maintenance or quick fixes.
- A plan focused only on **one mode** of travel.



Planning Area



Anticipated Schedule



Whittier's Background



Strategic hub for tourism, freight, rail, and Alaska Marine Highway System

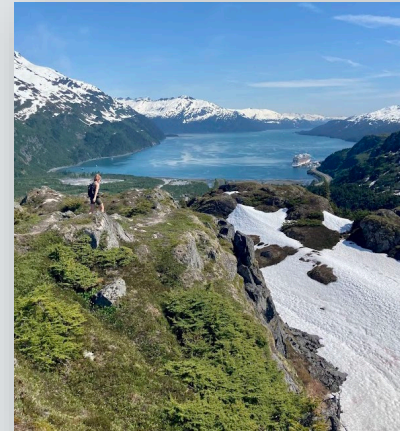


Constrained by narrow geography, limited land, and sole vehicle access via the one-way tunnel



Military legacy including the Alaska Railroad land ownership and the Buckner Building

Photo from the Buckner Building Wikipedia page



Tourism draw with two cruise terminals, day cruises, and abundant wildlife/recreation

Transportation in Whittier



Current Opportunities

- **Huna Totem** cruise ship docks and activities
- **Visitor facilities needed** for tourism, shopping, and transportation staging
- **Shotgun Cove** road extension
- **ARRC freight growth** with plans for container, break-bulk, and rail infrastructure upgrades
- **Small boat harbor demand** with years-long waitlists for private slips
- **Business expansion opportunities** through the City's Draft Waterfront & Economic Development Plan
- **Transportation challenges** with delays and need for multimodal improvements



Objectives



Establish a Transportation Vision: Define a clear and compelling vision for Whittier's future transportation system that aligns with the City's strategic goals and future land use.



Explore Funding Options: Identify and evaluate innovative funding opportunities to support the realization of transportation improvements.



Identify Incremental Improvements: Outline specific improvement projects that support future usage needs and improve movement to and between the various activities within the City of Whittier.



Practical Implementation: Provide an actionable plan that remains relevant and usable, with the use of short-term (1-2 years), medium-term (3-5 years), and long-term (5 years and beyond) timescales.



Incorporate Stakeholder Input: Incorporate a plan that actively gathers and uses feedback from a broad range of stakeholders and the public.



Promote Multimodal Transportation and Intermodal Connectivity: Create a plan that identifies and improves multimodal transportation and intermodal connectivity for the wide range of users.

Public Involvement



Completed Engagement Opportunities

- **Pop-up information booths** (July 16)
 - Head of the Bay Cruise Ship Dock
 - Whittier Harbor
 - Begich Towers
 - Cliffside Marina Cruise Ship Dock
- **Online survey** (July 15 - 31)
 - 448 responses were received from residents, commuting workers, and visitors

Photo by Yereth Rosen/Alaska Beacon



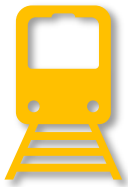
What We Have Heard



Themes from Public Feedback



Safety



Tunnel Access/Delays



Maintenance & Ownership



Parking



Wayfinding/Signage



Community Access

What We've Heard From Residents



Issues & Needs

- Poor road and sidewalk conditions, including potholes and winter maintenance
- Parking congestion and limited availability
- Railroad crossing delays and tunnel schedule constraints
- Safer sidewalks, crossings, and bicycle connections within town
- Limited and inconsistent airstrip infrastructure, with seasonal maintenance needs

Opportunities & Suggested Solutions

- Extend and reprioritize tunnel hours to better serve residents
- Increase rail use over buses/motorcoaches for cruise passengers
- Add shuttle services linking cruise ports, train station, harbor, and town areas
- Strengthen coordination with city administration and address corporate land ownership concerns

What We've Heard From **Commuting Workers**



Issues & Needs

- High tunnel fees, limited schedules, and conflicts with freight, RVs, buses, and trains
- Limited harbor amenities, parking shortages, and inadequate services/facilities
- Insufficient airport infrastructure for emergencies or weather-dependent uses
- More consistent parking and expanded harbor amenities (slips, repair areas)
- Stronger traffic management and enforcement to reduce congestion

Opportunities & Suggested Solutions

- Extend/flex tunnel hours and regulate traffic by mode (freight, RVs, buses, motorcoaches)
- Explore new infrastructure such as elevated gondolas or a traffic-only tunnel
- Roadway upgrades, including added lanes, and consistent maintenance
- Shift rail freight operations to non-active hours while balancing tourism growth
- Crossing enforcement in high pedestrian areas

What We've Heard From **Visitors**



Issues & Needs

- Pedestrian safety concerns, including limited sidewalks and poor signage
- Maintain and improve the airport/airstrip to support year-round access
- Expanded parking, including long-term boat trailer and seasonal visitor spaces
- Additional visitor amenities such as camping areas, lodging, and public kayak launches

Opportunities & Suggested Solutions

- Reassess tunnel fees, harbor charges, and local tax structures
- Improve harbor facilities (boat slips, launch sites, staffing, signage, and staging areas)
- Add covered walkways, wayfinding, and visitor information centers to support navigation
- Develop scenic roads, hiking trails, and recreation access to strengthen Whittier's tourism appeal
- Support more local business and mixed land uses

Project Development, Prioritization, & Evaluation



Project Development Approach



1. Check identified needs with project stakeholders and the public

2. Seek feedback on evaluation criteria, define project scoring process

3. Thoroughly evaluate needs

4. Develop preliminary project descriptions

5. Prioritize projects using the prioritization matrix

6. Confirm priorities with the public and stakeholders

7. Identify steps to implement, manage, and maintain projects

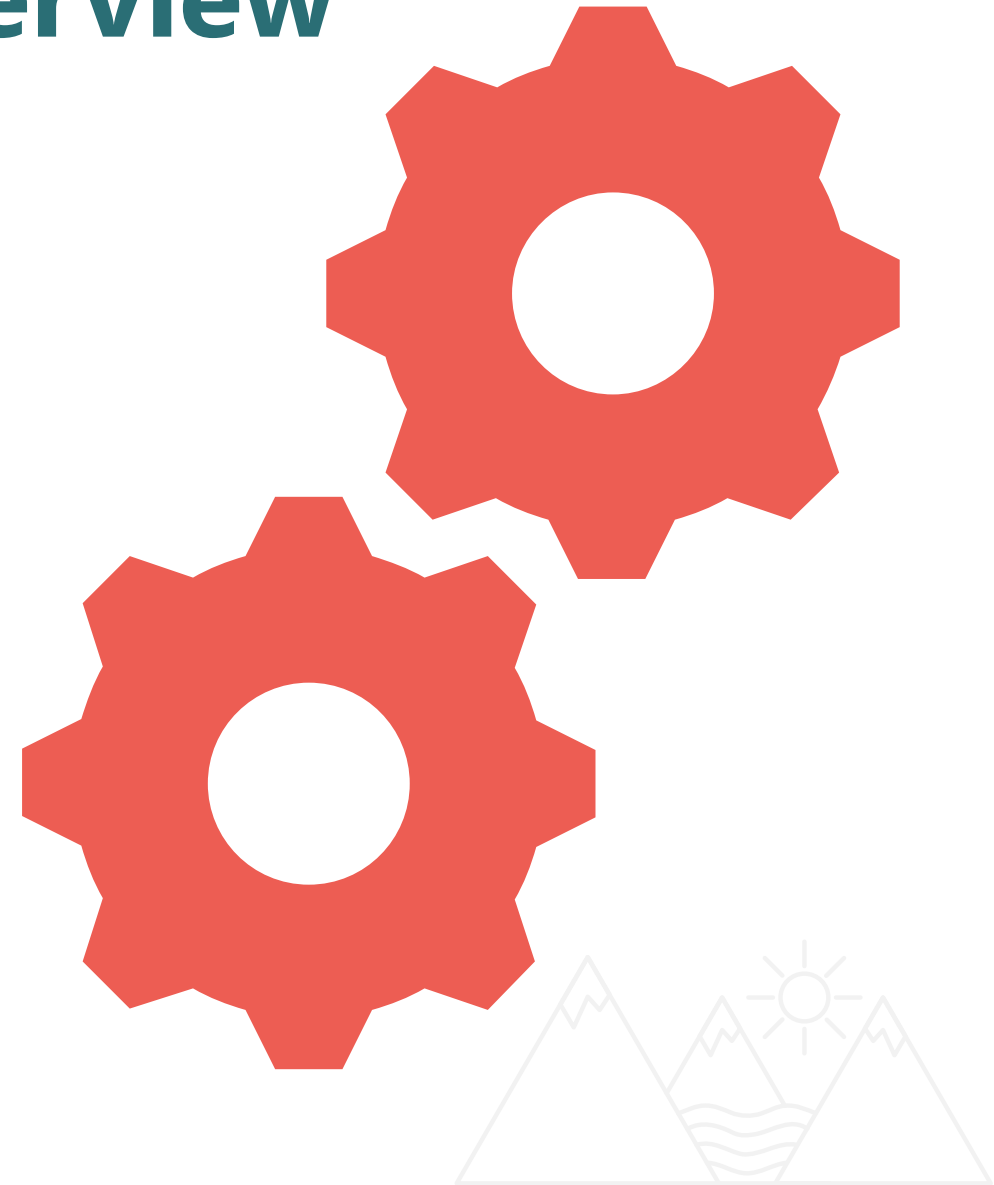
8. Document in a final Master Plan



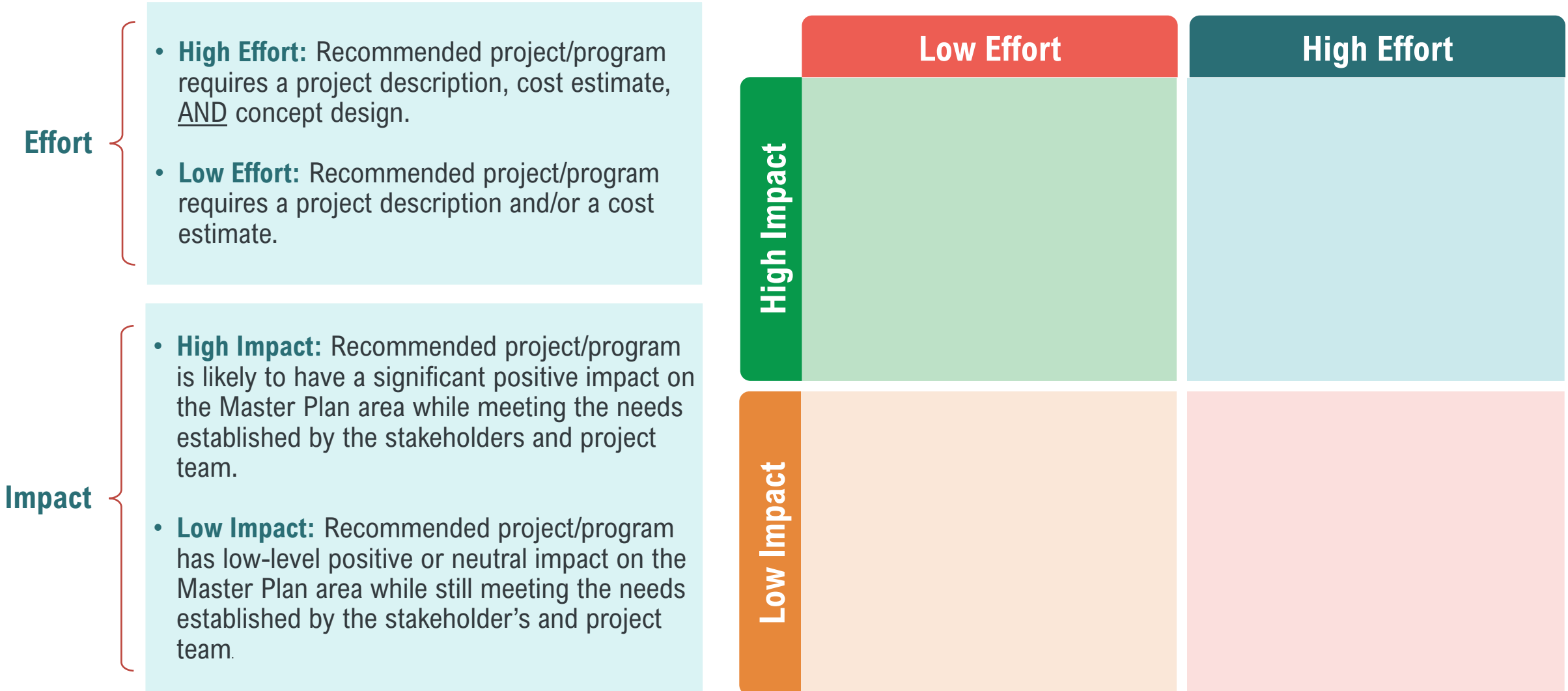
Prioritization Matrix Overview

What Does the Prioritization Matrix Evaluate?

- This matrix helps to identify and sort projects into four quadrants of “Quick Wins,” “Major Projects,” “Fill-Ins,” and “Future Evaluation.”
- This method promotes objective, data-driven decision-making and highlights the projects with the greatest potential impact and value.

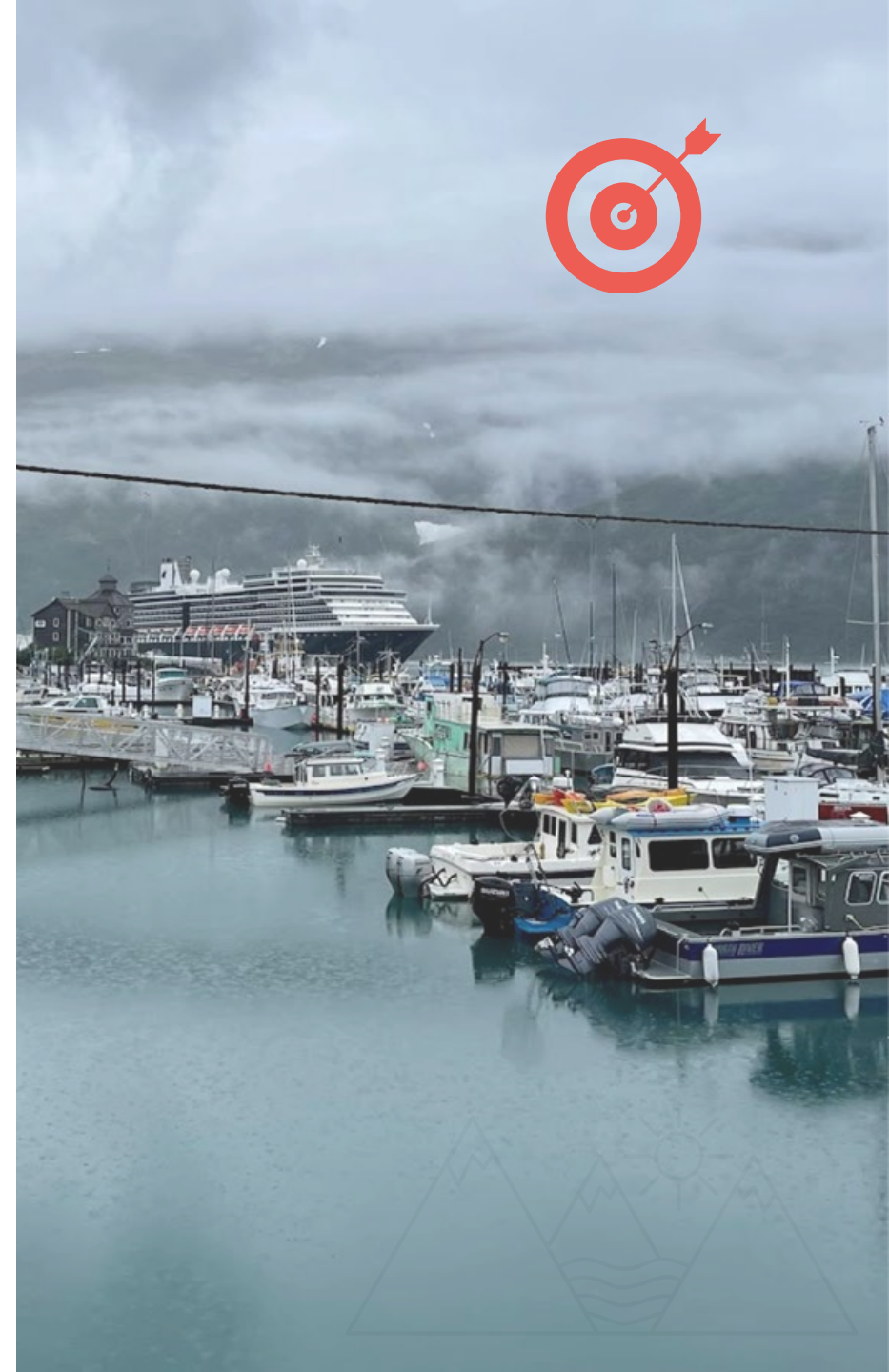


Prioritization Matrix



Prioritization Matrix Activity

- The planning team has identified 14 opportunities for Whittier's transportation system based on feedback from the July 2025 community survey.
- Using the prioritization matrix and sticky notes provided, place these opportunities in the category you believe it fits best.



We want your feedback!

Project Contacts:

DOT&PF

- Scott Maybrier, Project Manager
- Judy Chapman, Planning Lead

City of Whittier

- Jackie Wilde, City Manager
- Adison Spafford, Assistant City Manager

DOWL

- Renee Whitesell, Project Manager
- Talli Vittetoe, Public Involvement

Website: www.WhittierMoves.com

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smartphone camera to view the
website and submit comments
on **Whittier Moves**.

