

WHITTIER MOVES TRANSPORTATION MASTER PLAN



Technical Advisory Committee Meeting No. 2 Summary

Meeting Information

Wednesday, January 21, 2026, from 9:30 – 11:30 AM via Microsoft Teams

Purpose:

Gather input from the Whittier Moves Transportation Master Plan (Whittier Moves) Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) on project development and prioritization for both Whittier Moves and the City of Whittier Safety Action Plan.

Planning Team Attendees:

Scott Maybrier	DOT&PF, Project Manager
Judy Chapman	DOT&PF, Planning Lead
Renee Whitesell	DOWL, Senior Project Manager
Marie Heidemann	DOWL, Senior Transportation Planner
Kendal Ramage	DOWL, Transportation Planner
Talli Vittetoe	DOWL, Public Involvement
Jackie Wilde	City of Whittier, City Manager
Shelby Carlson	City of Whittier, Assistant City Manager
Maija DiSalvo	RESPEC, Community & Regional Planner

Technical Advisory Committee & Attendees:

Gordon Burton	DOT&PF, Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel Facilities Manager
Romorenzo Marasigan	DOT&PF, Kenai Area Planner
Nicholas Cooley	City of Whittier, Acting Fire Chief
Scott Korbe	City of Whittier, Director of Public Works
Nick Olzeknak	Whittier Community Member
Griff Berg	USFS Chugach National Forest, Technical Services Staff Officer
Chris Stewart	USFS Chugach National Forest, District Ranger
Kristen Smith	Prince William Sound Economic Development District, Executive Director



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Kathleen Ashton	Holland America/Princess, Alaska Transportation Director
Britta Hamre	Alaska Municipal League, Senior Planner
Meghan Clemens	Alaska Railroad Corporation, Director of External Affairs
Jesse Darby	Alaska Wildlife Troopers, Sergeant
Travis Peterson	Webber, Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel Project Manager

Twenty-three (23) people attended the meeting, including ten (10) members of the planning team.

Meeting Summary

Presentation

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in coordination with the City of Whittier (Whittier), hosted the second TAC meeting for Whittier Moves. Renee Whitesell, DOWL Senior Project Manager, began the presentation by introducing the planning team members and asking participants to share their name, role, and one improvement they would like to see for Whittier's transportation system. Participants were reminded that their purpose as a TAC member is to provide guidance and feedback on analysis, review plan goals and strategies, and help advance recommended projects beyond the planning process into design, funding, and construction. Renee noted that this purpose overlaps in part with the Whittier Safety Action Plan.

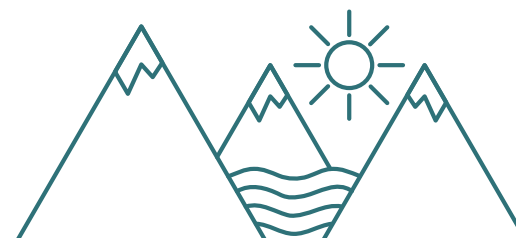
Transportation Master Plan Review

Renee provided an overview of transportation master planning and how it applies to Whittier Moves. A transportation master plan establishes a long-term vision, typically looking 20 years ahead, for how a community's transportation system should grow and improve. The process begins with documenting existing conditions across all transportation modes and assessing how future changes in population, business activity, and economic development may affect transportation needs. Using this information and community input, the plan defines a vision for the future system and identifies goals, objectives, and priorities to support a safer, more accessible, and better-connected transportation network, while also supporting economic growth and environmental considerations.

Whittier Moves Overview

Whittier Moves seeks to establish a transportation vision that supports the Alaska DOT&PF and Whittier's long-term goals and priorities. The plan will also explore funding opportunities to support projects and include a practical implementation strategy with short-, medium-, and long-term actions. Finally, the plan will promote multimodal and intermodal connectivity.

The planning area for the Whittier Moves includes Whittier's core downtown and harbor areas as well as areas beyond city boundaries that affect how people and goods move in and out of the community.



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While much of the focus is on Whittier itself, the plan also considers connections to Whittier's Shotgun Cove Road project and other areas where future growth or activity may influence transportation needs.

Whittier Safety Action Plan Overview

Marie Heidemann, DOWL Project Manager, introduced the Whittier Safety Action Plan, a City led plan which is funded through the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Safe Streets for All (SS4A) Program. The Whittier Safety Action Plan will identify safety issues, analyze data, and recommend strategies and projects to improve safety using the United States Department of Transportation (USDOT) Safe System Approach. This approach focuses on five areas: safer people, safer vehicles, safer speeds, safer roads, and post-crash care.

Project Prioritization and Evaluation

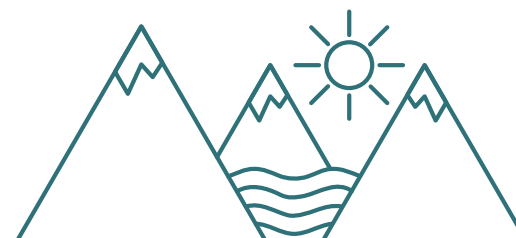
Renee reminded participants that they received the full list of projects identified thus far through the analysis of the existing conditions and traffic and safety reports and thanked those who had already provided feedback prior to the meeting. Renee reviewed themes that have emerged from public feedback, including safety, tunnel access/delays, maintenance and ownership, parking, wayfinding/signage, and community access.

She then provided a recap of the activity from the first TAC (September 2025) including the prioritization matrix used to evaluate and rank potential improvement opportunities and identify priorities.

Project Development Group Activity

Renee guided the TAC through eight project themes and fifty projects for discussion and evaluation during the meeting by inviting participants to give feedback to aid in the prioritization of the projects presented. One participant mentioned that some projects presented will be short-term, while others will more than likely have longer timelines; they asked how that is represented or is planned to be represented. Renee responded that this activity being conducted during the TAC is intended to help prioritize projects of all timelines within the 20-year plan vision and further timeline refinement will come later.

The subsequent sections present each theme discussed and their associated projects, the matrix used by TAC members to depict their priority projects, and a summary of comments received.



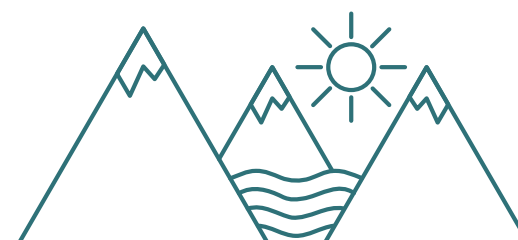
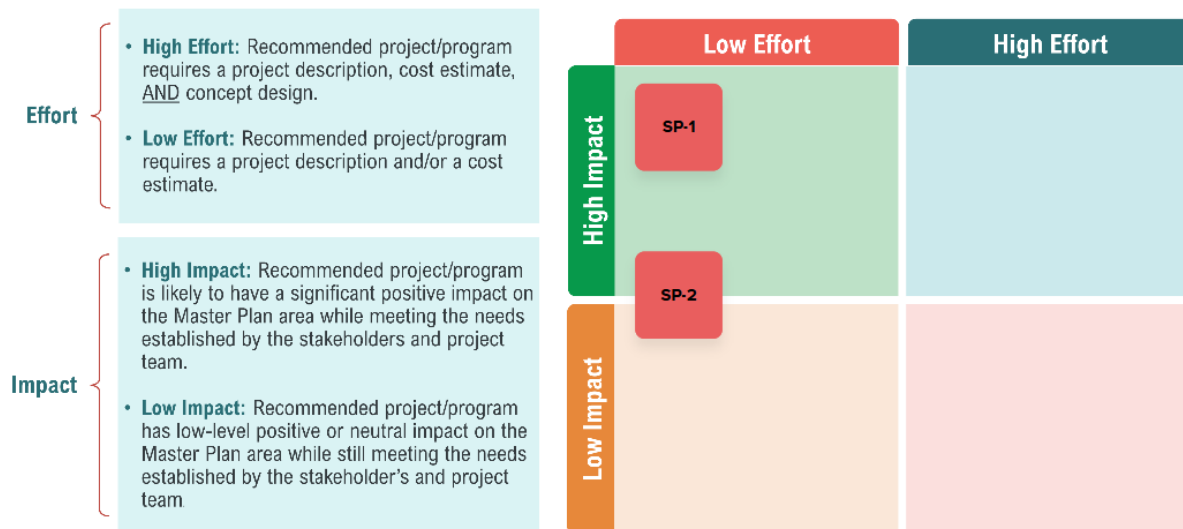
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Safety and Preparedness

Projects improve safety and readiness for natural and man-made hazards.

Project ID	Description
SP-1	Helipad: Evaluate feasibility to support emergency response and tour operations.
SP-2	Emergency Evacuation Plan: Establish clear plans and evacuation routes, additional tsunami signage, and provide a public safety education campaign.
SP-3	Water System Reliability: Install a loop water system to serve cruise ships without impacting local water service.



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SP-1: Helipad

A participant noted that the project would have a high impact relative to the low level of effort required to select and physically designate a location. Renee then asked emergency response representatives to weigh in. One participant said a helipad located closer to town would be beneficial for medical evacuation flights and would improve effectiveness by providing a centralized location. Another participant, who has experience transporting responders and individuals to the airstrip, agreed.

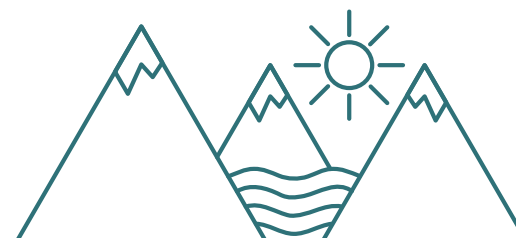
Renee asked tourism representatives for their perspectives. A participant agreed that the project would have a high impact for relatively low effort and asked whether a helipad would assist with medical transfers for cruise ship passengers, or if ambulances would remain the primary mode of transport. An emergency responder said ambulance use would likely not change, as many patients choose ambulances over helicopters due to cost. However, a helicopter would be available when necessary. Another emergency responder agreed and added that weather conditions also influence medical transportation decisions.

SP-2: Emergency Evacuation Plan

A participant noted that the project would require low effort and have low impact, as tsunamis are uncommon in Whittier. Another participant agreed that the risk is low but noted that a plan would be easy to implement and display in town in the event of an emergency.

SP-3: Water System Reliability

A participant noted that the cruise ship terminal could increase water demand, potentially reducing water available for fire suppression during an emergency. While not historically problematic, this could present challenges during a future catastrophic event.



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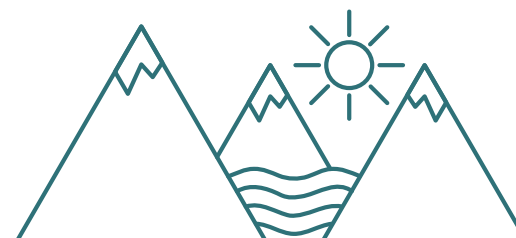
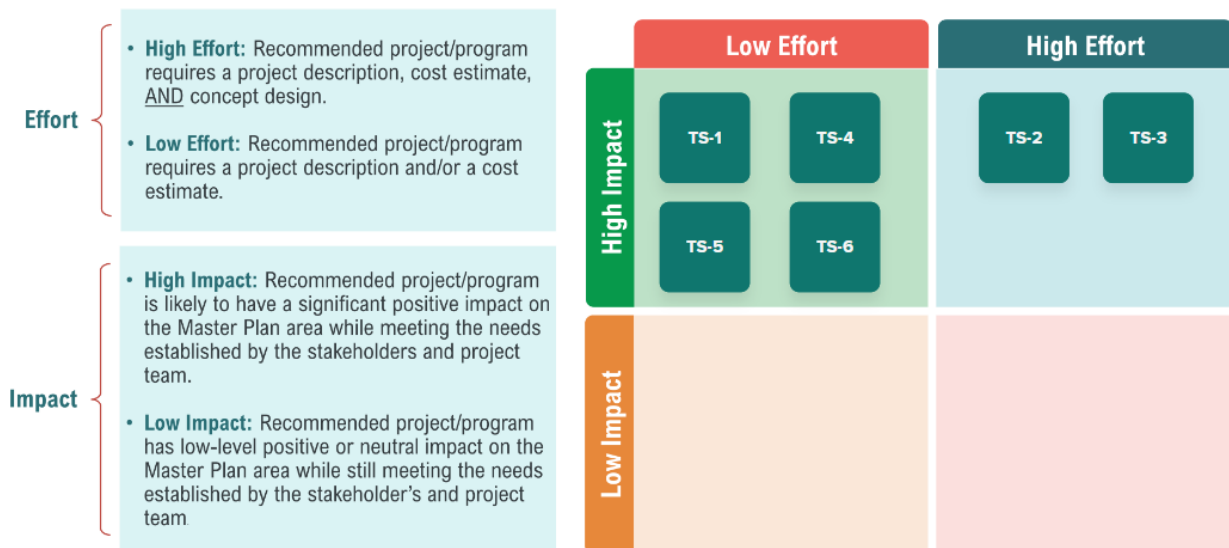


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Traffic Safety

Projects improve traffic safety.

Project ID	Description
TS-1	Traffic Enforcement: Improve enforcement of parking, speeding, and other traffic violations, and establish fines.
TS-2	Right Turn Lane at Whittier Street: Add a right turn lane to prevent traffic backups caused by boats and trailers.
TS-3	Ferry Terminal Relocation: Explore relocating the ferry terminal to Emerald Cove to reduce Harbor Triangle conflicts.
TS-4	Blackstone Road & Depot Road Visibility: Clear brush that causes the blind turn to improve sight distance.
TS-5	Gateway Drive / Portage Glacier Drive Sight Distance Improvements: Near term: Improve sight distance by replacing the yield sign with a stop sign and clearing vegetation at the intersection. Long term: Study Glacier Creek Terminal intersection impacts and potential curve flattening.
TS-6	Traffic Calming: Add traffic calming measures near the harbor, terminals, City Hall, and school walking routes, including speed bumps near City Hall and student walking routes.
TS-7	Tunnel Traffic Study: Detailed traffic and circulation study on movement of vehicles exiting the tunnel to understand impacts from Head of the Bay development.



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One participant said this theme is important and all the identified projects should be high priorities.

TS-1: Traffic Enforcement

Renee asked first responders for input on the projects. One first responder said it would likely require low effort, as local police are already on duty, and could have high impact depending on which driver groups, such as residents, visitors, or tourists, contribute most to traffic violations. Another participant noted that limited enforcement has led some local drivers to develop unsafe habits, which can confuse visitors who follow local behavior. They added that increased enforcement could also improve emergency response by reducing violations and improving overall safety.

A tourism representative agreed, noting that improved enforcement would be helpful for passengers disembarking in Whittier by reducing confusion and improving safety.

TS-2: Right Turn Lane at Whittier Street

A participant said this project would be high effort due to construction, with high impact.

TS-3: Ferry Terminal Relocation

A participant said the project would have a high impact in reducing traffic congestion, though it would require a high level of effort. Another participant agreed that traffic confusion and congestion are evident near the ferry terminal and noted that the project would also improve parking and pedestrian safety. A third participant added that while the project would be substantial, it would help reduce congestion by better separating key destinations in the area.

TS-4: Blackstone Road & Depot Road Visibility

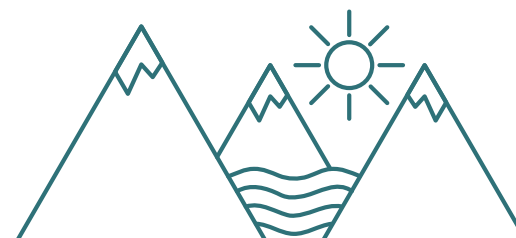
A participant said the issue is concerning and that the project would be low effort with high impact. Two additional participants agreed.

TS-5: Gateway Drive/Portage Glacier Drive Sight Distance Improvements

A participant said the issue is concerning and that the project would be low effort with high impact. Another participant agreed. A participant added that heavy tunnel traffic has led to near-miss incidents, and that clearing brush would improve visibility.

TS-6: Traffic Calming

A participant said the project would be beneficial, particularly near the boat ramp parking lot, where visitors who are unfamiliar with local traffic patterns often experience confusion. Another participant agreed, adding that additional wayfinding and clearer lane markings would help.



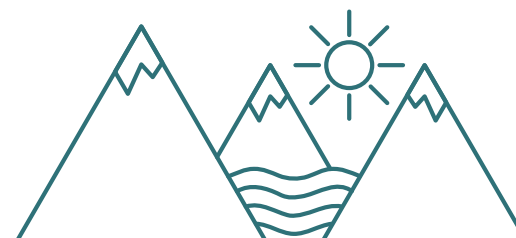
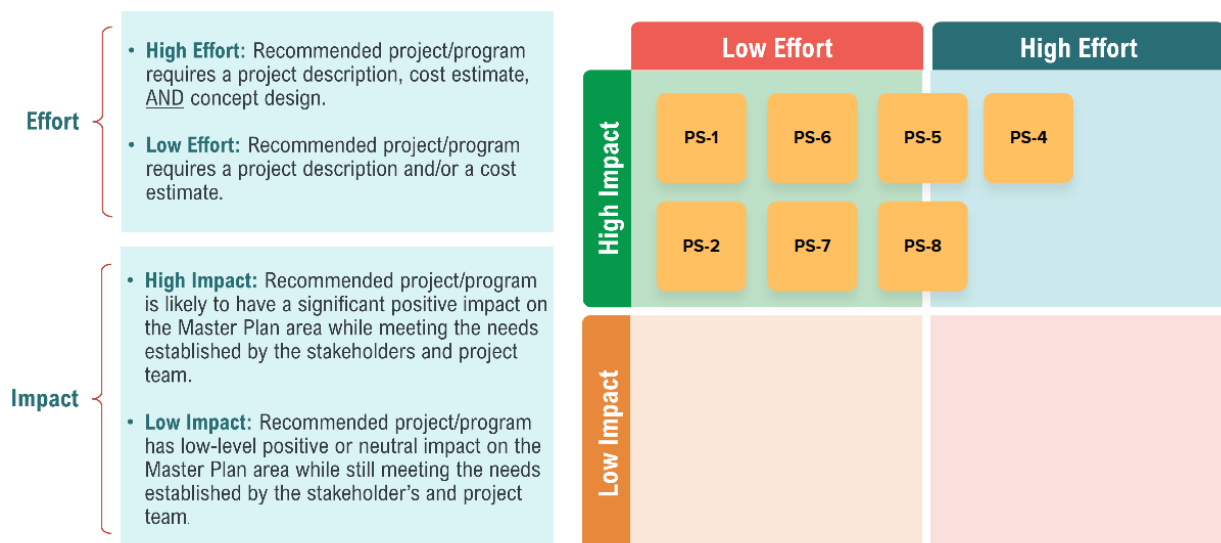
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Pedestrian Safety

Projects enhance pedestrian safety.

Project ID	Description
PS-1	Harbor View Drive / Camp Road Pedestrian Space: Convert angled parking to parallel parking to increase sidewalk width and space for furnishings and landscaping.
PS-2	Camp Road Crosswalk Improvements: Relocate the stop bar and add a marked crosswalk at the tunnel pathway crossing.
PS-3	Blackstone Road Pedestrian Warning: Replace the yield sign with a stop sign and pedestrian warning signage at Blackstone Road and Depot Road.
PS-4	Grade-Separated Rail Crossing: Consider a south-side road along the tracks to provide a grade-separated crossing at Whittier Street.
PS-5	Pedestrian Tunnel Upgrades: Improve lighting and drainage in the pedestrian tunnel beneath the train tracks.
PS-6	Harbor Triangle Pedestrian Access: Restrict or remove parking to improve pedestrian access and consider conversion to a park or visitor space.
PS-7	Additional Marked Crossings: Marked pedestrian crossings in areas with high pedestrian activity.
PS-8	ADA Sidewalk Compliance: Identify and reconstruct sidewalks that do not meet ADA accessibility standards.



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A participant noted that many of these projects could be combined.

PS-4: Grade-Separated Rail Crossing

A railroad representative noted that this project is included in the railroad's plan and would provide community benefits. Renee added that the planning team will reference the railroad planning information shared for this project and other railroad-related issues. Another participant suggested there may be smaller actions the City can take in the interim while railroad plans and projects are finalized.

PS-5: Pedestrian Tunnel Upgrades

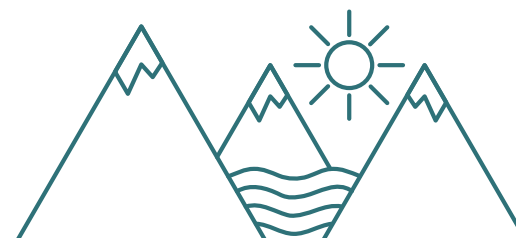
A participant said this project would be helpful, and another agreed, noting it would require a significant effort with substantial impact. A participant also emphasized the importance of considering winter maintenance, particularly given the project's potential role during natural disasters or emergency situations.

PS-6: Harbor Triangle Pedestrian Access

A participant said the area needs greater definition to improve safe use. Another participant agreed, noting this would be a low-effort, high-impact project that could increase parking, attract new businesses, and improve overall safety and usability. A participant also said a turnaround location is needed to improve traffic flow, which may include relocating the freight access site and ferry terminal egress.

PS-8: ADA Sidewalk Compliance

A participant noted this would be a high-impact, moderate-effort project that could improve safety for visitors and tourists traveling through town.



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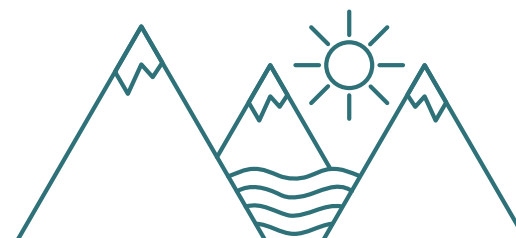


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Tourism and Community Connections

Projects enhance visitor experience and connections.

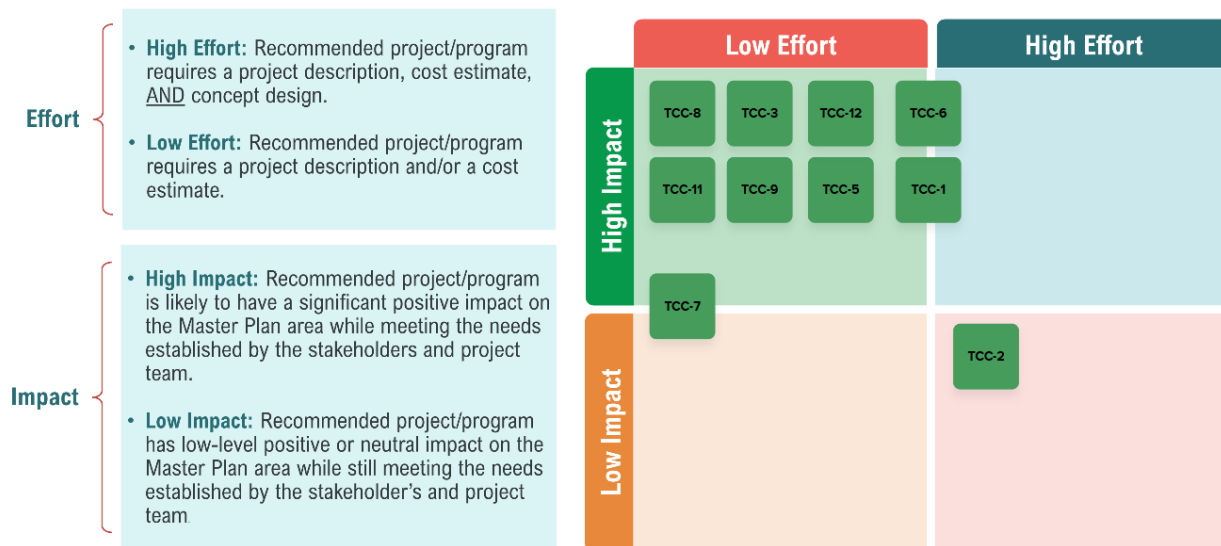
Project ID	Description
TCC-1	ARRC Passenger Platform Crossing: Improve railroad and pedestrian safety at the ARRC Passenger Platform through enhanced crosswalks, ADA-compliant ramps, advance stop bars, and improved warning signage.
TCC-2	Waterfront Bike and Scooter Share: Develop a local bike or scooter share program to improve mobility along the waterfront.
TCC-3	Wayfinding and Directional Signage: Implement the Economic Development Corporation Wayfinding Plan to improve directional signage for key destinations, parking areas, access points, and year-round users, using durable signage suitable for coastal conditions.
TCC-4	Visitor Information Services: Add a visitor center or expand public information signage.
TCC-5	Shuttle Connections: Create shuttle services to better connect cruise docks, harbor, train, trailheads, airport, and town, and pursue grant funding for implementation.
TCC-6	Rail Use for Cruise Passengers: Encourage greater use of rail to move cruise passengers.
TCC-7	Cruise Origin and Destination Identity: Strengthen Whittier's role as a cruise origin and destination, distinct from Anchorage.
TCC-8	Multi-Use Pathway: Head of the Bay to Harbor Triangle: Provide a continuous multi-use pathway from the Glacier Bay Terminal area to Ferry Terminal Road and the Harbor Triangle, including the Whittier Creek Bridge and north side of Harbor Road.
TCC-9	Whittier Street Multi-Use Pathway: Provide a continuous multi-use pathway on Whittier Street from Harbor Road to Glacier Street.
TCC-10	Tunnel to Harbor Triangle Pedestrian Connection: Create a clear pedestrian pathway connecting the tunnel to the Harbor Triangle.
TCC-11	Visitor Education and Wayfinding: Use high-visibility locations such as the tunnel, cruise docks, ferry terminal, and train platform to educate visitors and support wayfinding and pedestrian safety.
TCC-12	Covered Walkways: Add covered walkways through town to improve year-round pedestrian comfort.



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TCC-1: ARRC Passenger Platform Crossing

A participant noted that this project is part of the railroad master plan and includes improvements to efficiency and service capacity to Whittier. Another participant said the project would have high impact and would improve visibility and safety.

TCC-2: Waterfront Bike and Scooter Share

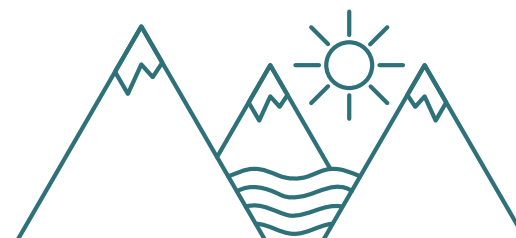
A participant said boat launchers will likely utilize these shares more than tourists between parking and boat launch locations. They added these shares likely wouldn't impact traffic enforcement significantly.

TCC-3: Wayfinding and Directional Signage

A Forest Service representative said the Chugach National Forest may be interested in partnering on this project to provide consistent messaging and align efforts. Participants added that the project would benefit both Alaska residents and visitors, with improved wayfinding helping connect people to recreational opportunities.

TCC-5: Shuttle Connections

A participant said this project could promote mobility for visitors during poor weather and support the local economy. Another participant noted that Seward's tax-funded shuttle has increased visitor traffic to local businesses, particularly for cruise ship passengers, and suggested this could be a model for Whittier.



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TCC-6: Rail Use for Cruise Passengers

A tourism representative said rail transports most cruise passengers in and out of Whittier and is an efficient option with minimal impacts to tunnel traffic. Another participant noted that encouraging rail use would be a low-effort approach, but capacity is limited without adding new rail cars to the fleet, which would require a much higher level of effort. A participant also said this project would be a low-effort way to reduce traffic.

TCC-7: Cruise Origin and Destination Identity

A participant said this low-effort project could help Whittier become a destination beyond cruise tourism, including for Alaska residents who do not typically visit or recreate there.

TCC-8: Multi-Use Pathway: Head of the Bay to Harbor Triangle

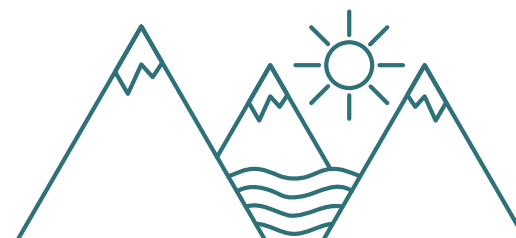
A participant suggested this project include connectivity to the Portage Pass Trailhead and noted it may present an opportunity for coordination with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS). A rail representative mentioned the at-grade crossing and asked the planning team to keep crossing safety in mind near the Portage Pass Trailhead. Another participant said this would be a high-impact, high-effort project. A participant also noted the project could include covered segments in combination with TCC-12.

TCC-11: Visitor Education and Wayfinding

A participant said this would benefit visitors. Another participant agreed, adding that this project would reduce confusion.

TCC-12: Covered Walkways

A participant said these walkways may be high effort but would have high impact. They would serve as protected areas, particularly during poor weather, and could be implemented in the harbor area to encourage tourists to explore and support local businesses.



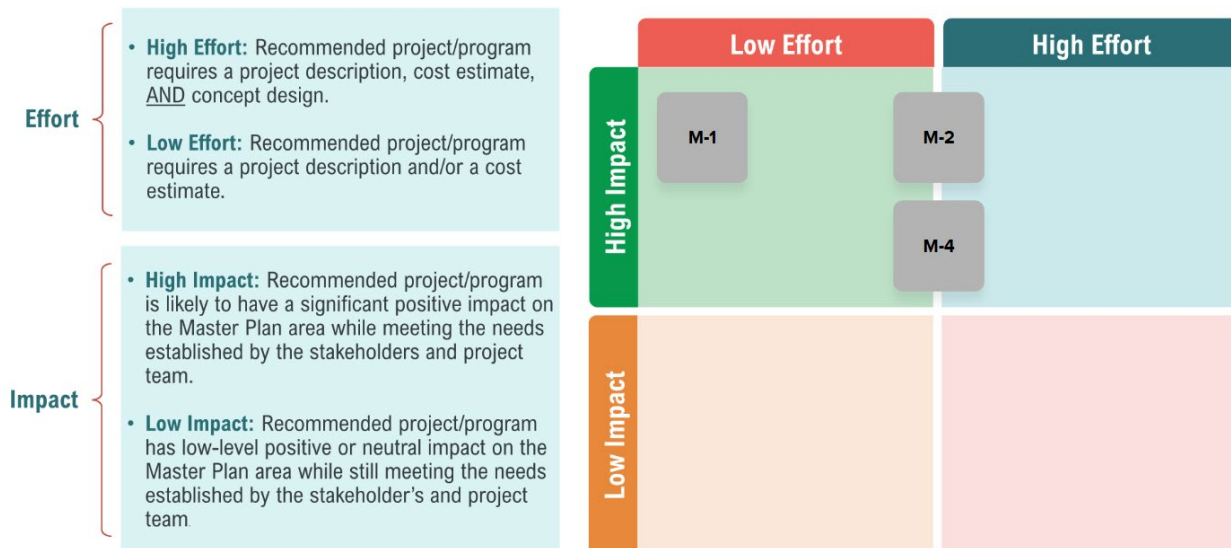
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Maintenance and Collaboration

Projects focus on improving maintenance with and emphasis on strong agency coordination.

Project ID	Description
M-1	Interagency Coordination: Strengthen coordination between the City, Alaska Railroad, and DOT&PF to address land ownership and management challenges.
M-2	Pavement and Snow Management: Develop a coordinated annual maintenance approach that includes pavement management, routine maintenance, snow removal responsibilities, and designated snow storage areas.
M-3	Pavement Management Plan: Collaborate between the City and DOT&PF to implement a Pavement Management Plan that includes routine maintenance such as crack sealing and overlays.
M-4	Traffic Management Plan: Develop and maintain an annual Traffic Management Plan addressing tunnel hours, routes, signage, parking, pedestrian paths, and enforcement.



A participant said there may soon be a need for a coordinated discussion among the City of Whittier, the Alaska Railroad, and the State of Alaska Legislature regarding growth and increasing maintenance needs. This discussion could help address current challenges and prepare for future growth and demands. Another participant added that coordination among the City, State, and Railroad has already been increasing in response to growth, particularly related to land ownership and road maintenance.



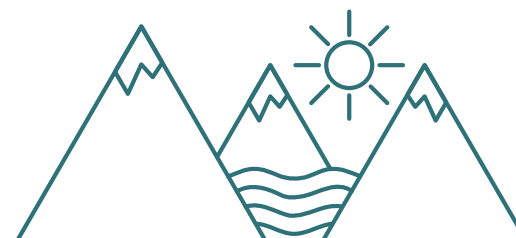
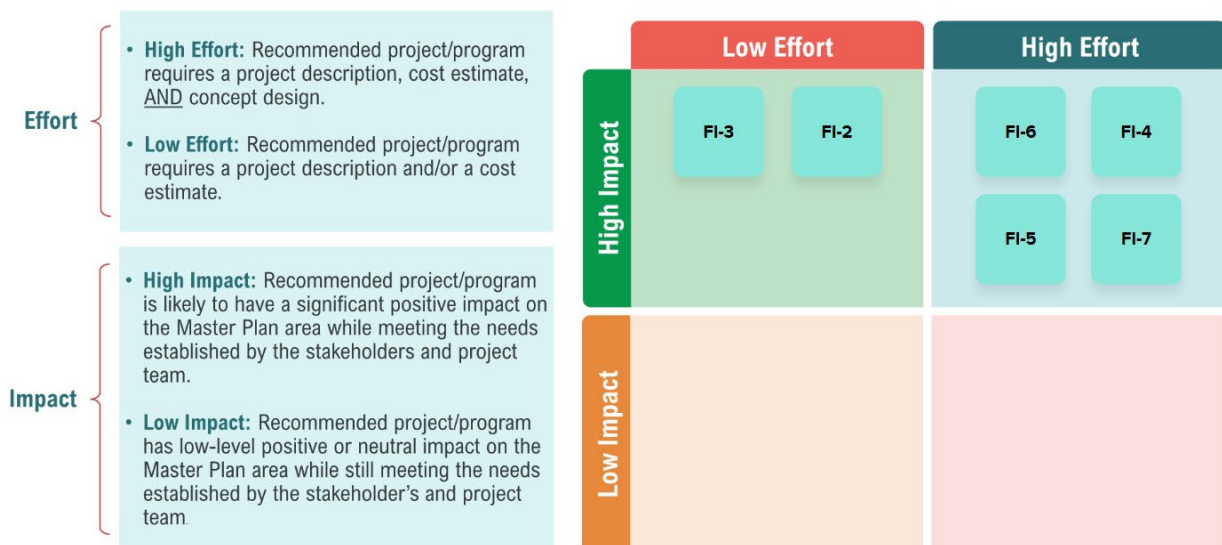
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Facility Improvements

Projects improve circulation, update aging infrastructure, and enhance overall experience.

Project ID	Description
FI-1	Harbor and Core Area Roadway Improvements: Rehabilitate or replace roads and sidewalks.
FI-2	Head of the Bay Terminal Road: Pave the road to the Head of the Bay terminal to address rutting from RV and bus traffic and explore partnership with Huna Totem.
FI-3	Public Kayak Launches: Install public kayak launches with parking and kayak racks between Head of the Bay and Smitty's Cove.
FI-4	Shotgun Cove Small Boat Harbor: Develop a small boat harbor at Shotgun Cove.
FI-5	Head of the Bay Boat Launch and Parking: Develop a boat launch facility with large-scale parking to reduce congestion and transportation conflicts.
FI-6	DeLong Dock Replacement
FI-7	Airport Infrastructure Improvements: Improve airport infrastructure to support emergency and weather-dependent operations, including runway extension, winter maintenance capability, a larger apron with aircraft tie-downs, upgraded weather equipment and windsock, and a small camping or lodging area. Explore the ability to provide aviation fuel at the airstrip.



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FI-2: Head of the Bay Terminal Road

A participant said this may be an opportunity to coordinate with USFS to pave the access to the National Forest.

FI-3: Public Kayak Launches

A participant said this project has been discussed by the Harbor Commission, noting that kayaking is a topic of high interest but has seen limited progress in the past. They added this would be a low-effort, high-impact project, as it would require minimal infrastructure while helping promote Whittier as a kayaking destination.

FI-4: Shotgun Cove Small Boat Harbor

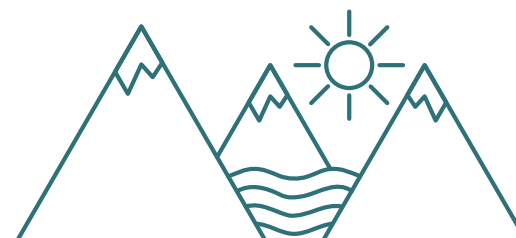
A participant said the City owns property near Shotgun Cove, where weather conditions are more temperate than in town. They noted that a ferry terminal or small boat harbor at this location would likely require less weather-related infrastructure than a facility in town. While this would be a large project, it could reduce long-term maintenance needs and support economic growth in Whittier. Another participant added that the USFS may be interested in collaborating on the facility to encourage recreation in the area.

FI-5: Head of the Bay Boat Launch and Parking

A participant said this would be a high-effort, high-impact project that could expand recreational opportunities and attract more visitors to Whittier.

FI-6: DeLong Dock Replacement

A participant said this may be an expensive project, but it is necessary for Whittier's seafood industry operations.



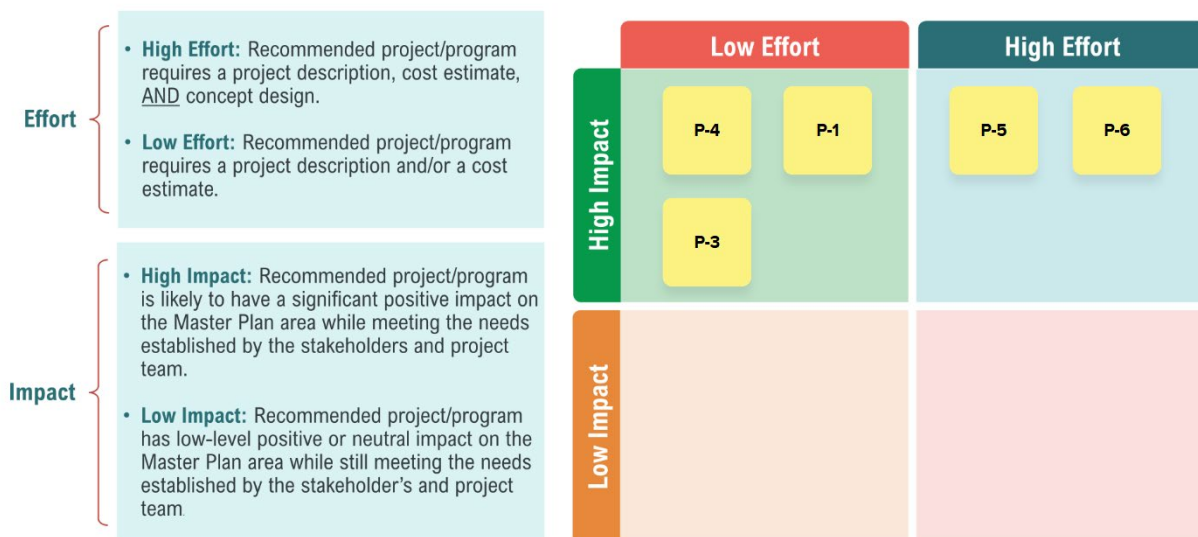
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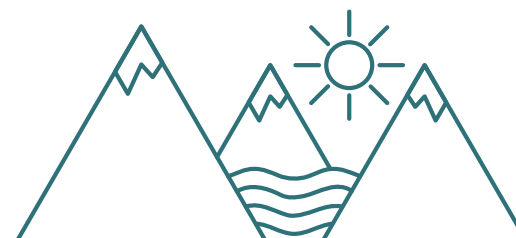
Parking

Projects improve parking access, safety, and convenience.

Project ID	Description
P-1	Harbor Triangle Business Parking: Designate parking and access in the Harbor Triangle for business use only.
P-2	Ferry Terminal Parking: Provide additional parking for city use at the ferry terminal.
P-3	Parking Payment and Signage: Improve parking signage and evaluate mobile payment options.
P-4	Parking Time Limits and Enforcement: Enforce two-hour parking limits and increase enforcement during peak periods.
P-5	Visitor and Oversized Vehicle Parking: Identify additional parking locations for visitors and designate spaces for trailers, snow machines, and other oversized vehicles.
P-6	Motorcoach and Shuttle Parking: Designate parking and waiting areas for motorcoaches and shuttle buses.



Participants discussed the strong need for increased parking capacity, particularly during summer events and holidays.



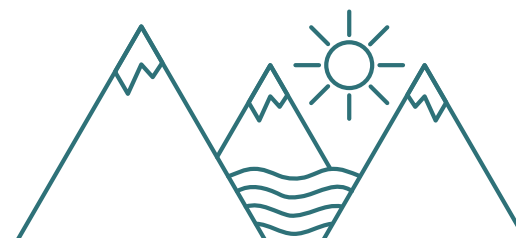
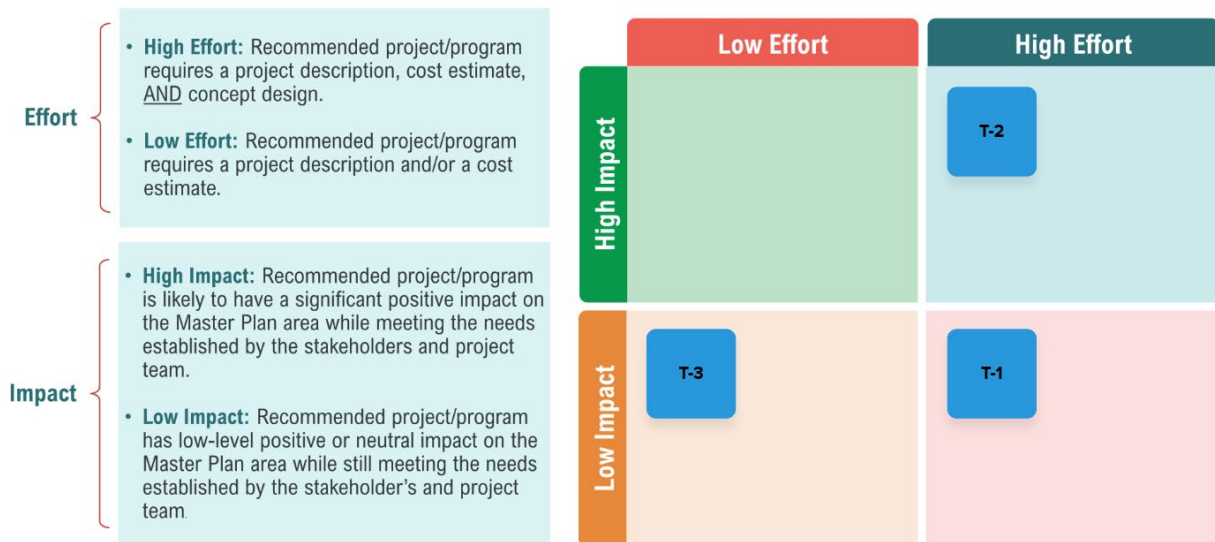
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Tunnel Infrastructure and Improvements

Projects focus on modernizing the Anton Anderson Memorial Tunnel to improve operations, resilience, and experience.

Project ID	Description
T-1	Resident-Focused Tunnel Operations: Evaluate ways to better serve Whittier residents, including adjusted tunnel hours and the feasibility of free or reduced tunnel fares.
T-2	Tunnel Capacity for Tourism Growth: Improve tunnel infrastructure and services to support future tourism growth, including upgrades to ventilation, lighting, and safe houses to increase vehicle throughput during tunnel openings.
T-3	Tunnel Staging Area Pavilion: Add a pavilion at the tunnel staging area to provide a designated, safe waiting space for visitors outside their vehicles.



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T-1: Resident-Focused Tunnel Operations

A participant said this project would be high effort with low impact due to federal funding criteria related to tolling, and another participant agreed. A participant also added that freight companies should be encouraged to avoid tunnel use during peak traffic hours to reduce conflicts.

T-2: Tunnel Capacity for Tourism Growth

A participant said this would be a high-effort, high-impact project, and another participant agreed, particularly in light of increasing cruise ship traffic.

T-3: Tunnel Staging Area Pavilion

A participant said a previous pavilion was heavily vandalized, infrequently used, and ultimately removed, and noted this project would be low impact with high effort. Another participant added that potential safety hazards would outweigh any minimal benefits for travelers staged for less than an hour at a time. A participant suggested revising the project to focus on wayfinding and visitor information that directs travelers to recreational sites, which could reduce pedestrian hazards in the staging area while encouraging recreation in Whittier.

Next Steps and Closing Comments

Renee closed by thanking the TAC for their engagement and contributions. The planning team will review the feedback received, identify the highest-priority projects, and share those recommendations with the TAC via email. Participants were encouraged to share any additional ideas with the team by email and to review planning information on the project website.

Before adjourning, the team invited members to participate in additional engagement activities at the Whittier Safety Summit, scheduled later that day at the Whittier School gym.

