



Whittier Master Planning

PROJECT FACTS

The Alaska Railroad (ARRC) is pursuing a master plan to guide development of railroad infrastructure in Whittier to improve passenger and freight train operations and community interaction.

Project Scope / Objectives

- Accommodate anticipated increases in rail passenger and freight activities.
- Improve safety and efficiency of passenger and freight operations.
- Segregate passenger and freight operations to the extent possible.
- Promote passenger safety and convenience.
- Enhance the safety of pedestrian movements, including intermodal and marine/land interfaces.
- Reduce modal conflict between railroad operations and vehicle access between the waterfront and the city center.

Additional goals and objectives specifically related to the Whittier community are:

- Enhance the Whittier community (residents and visitors).
- Integrate the Railroad Master Plan and the Whittier Comprehensive Plan to foster local economy development.

Status

A number of previous studies and planning efforts have been undertaken and contribute to the current Master Planning effort:

- Whittier Comprehensive Plan Update (City of Whittier, 2005)
- Whittier Intermodal Development Concept and Design, Draft Needs and Purpose Report (Alaska Railroad, 2004)
- Draft Whittier Intermodal: Market Forces & Revenue Estimates (Alaska Railroad, 2003)
- Phase One Environmental Site Assessment for Whittier Intermodal Development (Alaska Railroad).
- November 2008 meeting with city to address crossing issues.



Completed Projects

Through these planning efforts, a number of projects have been accomplished.

- **Yard Pedestrian Underpass** – 300-foot portal for safe passage under the railyard. Completed 2002. \$2.285 million budget funded 80% by Federal Transit Administration (FTA) and 20% ARRC.
- **Marginal Wharf** – closed due to deteriorating infrastructure in 2002. Demolition complete in 2008.
- **DeLong Dock** – fender piling, water and electrical service improvements to accommodate displaced Marginal Wharf tenants. More than \$600,000 spent since 2002, funded by ARRC.
- **Equipment Maintenance Facility** – new building to store and maintain heavy equipment. Completed 2003. \$2.225 million budget funded 80% FTA and 20% ARRC.
- **Freight Barge Slip Pass-Pass** – Side loading structures complete in 2002; \$2.26 million budget funded by ARRC.
- **Cruiseship Passenger Loading/Unloading Spur** – spur and platform constructed near Whittier Creek in 2004 to accommodate safe transfer of passengers to and from the train. Funded by ARRC.
- **Transit Shed** – demolition and removal completed in 2003. \$1.27 million budget funded 80% FTA and 20% ARRC.
- **Security Improvements** – includes security office at yard entrance, seasonal fence on the yard water side, and video cameras to monitor barge operations and restricted areas. Funded by ARRC.
- **Whittier Master Plan** – Initiated in 2004 with an inter-modal planning study to improve passenger amenities, security review, and track layout engineering. Work resumed in 2006 to address plans for the Marginal Wharf and optimal

freight handling. \$598,000 budget funded 80% by FTA and 20% by ARRC.

Projects Underway

Other projects prescribed by the plan and currently underway:

- **Freight Barge Slip Rehabilitation** – Initiated a multi-year program to repair or replace aging components, including control shack; mooring fenders, camels and dolphins; the pass-pass structure; sheet pile wall; towers, decking and several other areas. The Railroad internally funded \$325,000 in 2006, \$335,000 in 2007 and budgeted \$350,000 in 2008.
- **Passenger Intermodal Improvements** – Phase One includes preliminary engineering, environmental permitting and demolition of the Marginal Wharf. The project was awarded to American Civil Constructors in fall 2007, with work beginning in late 2007, and completed in 2008. \$3.1 million budget funded 91% by FTA and 9% by ARRC matching funds. Freight dock customers currently use a winch connected to the Marginal Wharf. Following wharf demolition, the eliminated winch was replaced with a new barge slip dolphin. \$400,000 budget for dolphin construction is funded 100% by ARRC.
- Barge Slip major modification to include stern (front) unloading improvements that will facilitate more efficient rail and forklift pass-pass load/unload activity. The barge slip ramp was extended and track and ground work accomplished in 2009 at a cost of \$870,000 funded by ARRC. The front unloading area will be replaced in 2010 with ARRC and Lynden each funding \$2 million.

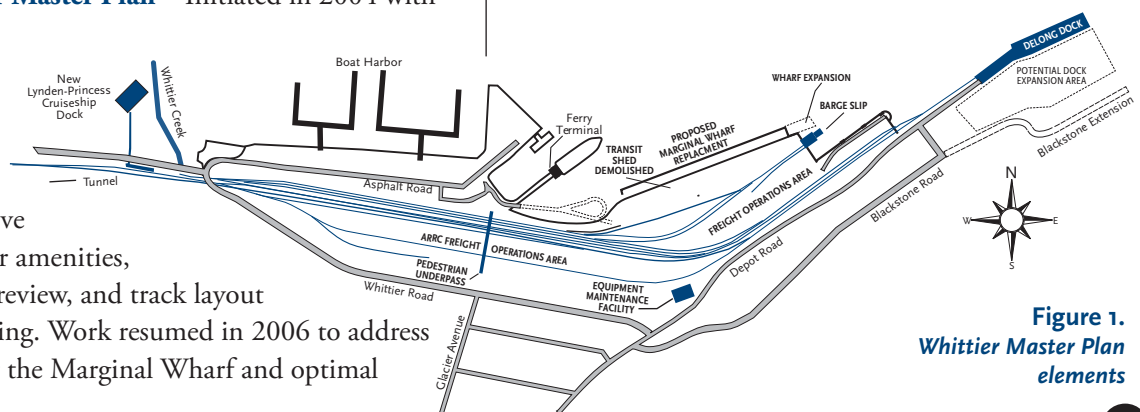


Figure 1.
Whittier Master Plan
elements

Future Actions Recommended by the Whittier Master Plan

The Master Plan has identified the following additional actions to meet future needs.

Security

- Fence the entire working yard perimeter with access-control gates.
- Card reader access for entrance and exit control.
- Additional lighting and cameras to cover all yard areas.
- For passenger facilities, install equipment, including walk-through metal detectors, hand-wand detectors, explosive trace detectors, video cameras with analytic software.

Railyard and Track Improvements

- Reconfigure track within the rail yard to separate passenger and freight activity, and improve yard drainage and snow removal.
- Work with city to develop future options to reduce traffic delays at the major railroad/highway crossing adjacent to Whittier Creek.

Passenger Intermodal Improvements

- Dockside Passenger Improvements needed to address current limited dock space for day boats, multi-day small cruise boats, and cruise ships.
- Given Marginal Wharf demolition, construct improved public use facilities, including new dock, to provide access for day boats and multi-day small ship cruise boats. (see Figure 2)

The passenger rail platform near Whittier Creek is nearly half a mile from water-borne facilities, and its location often conflicts with freight operations. Key rail passenger improvements include:

- Locate passenger facilities near the Ferry Terminal and public use dock, near the Pedestrian Underpass, and easily accessible to road and harbor.
- Pending funding a new passenger terminal and train-loading facility will remain a high priority.
- Build sheltered, Americans With Disabilities Act-compliant rail terminal, to accommodate air/marine/rail ticketing, baggage handling, passenger waiting and loading areas, bus staging and vehicle parking.
- Next to the terminal construct 500-foot covered passenger train loading facility including two rails for simultaneous loading of two passenger trains.

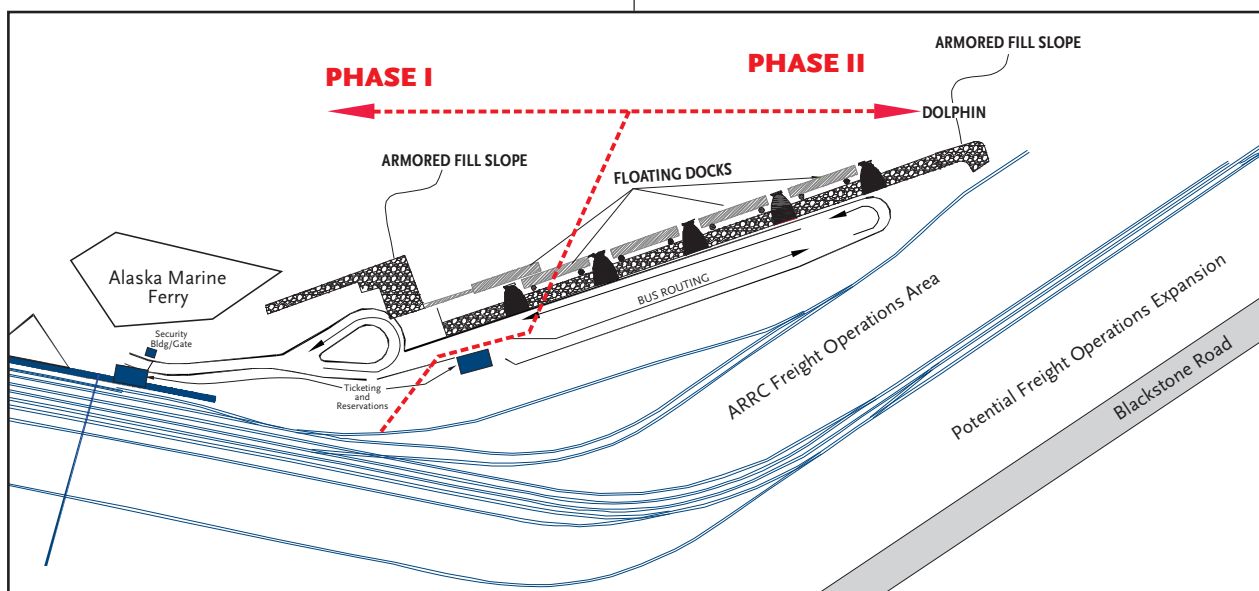


Figure 2. Whittier Passenger Improvement Intermodal Plan