

City Manager's Report – Department Summary

August 2025

City Manager's Office

Manager's Monthly Wilde Recognition

This month, I want to recognize four of our outstanding Harbor crew: Sili Tuiuli, Sam Taulealo, Matthew Pese, and Malcolm Afoa.

This summer, I had the privilege of watching Sili and Sam coordinate the launch ramp on multiple occasions. Even in the most hectic moments, they worked with such precision and timing that it felt like watching a well-conducted symphony.

Matthew and Malcolm take on the behind-the-scenes work that keeps our harbor welcoming and functional for everyone. They maintain seven restroom facilities, care for the grounds, and manage trash for more than 300,000 visitors each season—tasks that require dedication, attention to detail, and a strong work ethic.

Harbor work is often a selfless job—one that doesn't always come with the kudos or thanks it deserves. Each of these crew members embodies the commitment and skill that keep Whittier's harbor running smoothly, and they have more than earned our appreciation.

Continued coordination on the ARRC land purchase to secure key parcels for long-term infrastructure goals. Prepared RFQs and RFBs for playground equipment, door/window repairs, and public space improvements. Attended the 2025 Brownfields Conference, gaining strategies for funding, redevelopment, and regulatory compliance.

Assistant City Manager's Office

Advanced several major initiatives including the FHWA Safe Streets for All Action Plan with DOWL selected as contractor, the MARAD Delong Dock grant application now 75% complete with strong stakeholder support, and the Buckner Building cleanup RFQ closing August 13. Whittier Moves public outreach produced ~450 survey responses, and the TAC's first meeting is scheduled for September 12.

Finance

Addressed the 2024 harbor billing audit deficiency through staff training and process improvements. Secured significant funding: \$10M+ for Shotgun Cove Road Phase II, \$3.5M forgivable loan for Water Well Replacement, and \$1.59M for wastewater upgrades. General Fund revenues are at 38.4% with expenditures at 44.6%, and sales tax revenue is up \$146K year-over-year.

City Clerk

Advanced cybersecurity upgrades and prepared for the AAMC conference, including exhibitor/sponsor registration and an interactive elections panel. Released the updated candidate

packet for the October election and continued recruitment for P&Z and Port & Harbor Commissions. Supported outreach for Whittier Moves and WEDP initiatives.

Harbor

Completed collection of second-half 2025 moorage contracts and released the draft Waterfront Economic Development Plan for public comment. Continued QuickBooks and MarinaGO integration, installed digital power meters, and improved waste management. Phase III harbor construction mobilization is planned for mid-September.

Police

Responded to 535 calls for service in July, with most being officer-generated security checks. Issued 29 traffic citations for speeding and parking violations. Officer Lloyd Willis earned his Alaska Basic Police Certificate, adding to his extensive prior law enforcement experience.

Fire

Responded to 32 calls for service in July, supported July 4 events, and continued community programs. Provided 196 meals through The Children's Lunch Box partnership and recognized the essential contributions of department volunteers.



Public Works

Completed seasonal equipment preparations and preventive maintenance. Advanced major projects including SCR to Emerald (mobilizing August 18) and Whittier Core Upgrades in the design phase. Completed Lift Station #5 work and secured funding for the Water Well Improvement Project and an emergency generator.

Full Detailed City Manager's Report – August 2025

City Manager's Report – August 2025

This month's report highlights progress across multiple departments, reflecting Whittier's continued commitment to infrastructure development, financial stewardship, and community engagement.

City Manager's Office

Staff continued work with legal counsel and contractors on the ARRC land purchase, following Council direction to secure parcels critical to Whittier's long-term infrastructure goals. Preparation is also underway for RFQs and RFBs for several upcoming City projects, including playground equipment installation, door and window replacements, and upgrades to community spaces. These initiatives will enhance amenities and improve safety for residents and visitors.

I attended the 2025 Brownfields Conference, which provided valuable strategies for securing funding, navigating regulatory requirements, and managing redevelopment projects. Networking with other municipal leaders and industry experts yielded practical ideas that can be applied directly to Whittier's ongoing and future initiatives.

Assistant City Manager's Report

The FHWA Safe Streets for All Action Plan solicitation closed on July 24. Two proposals were received and reviewed by an evaluation committee. DOWL received the highest score at 88, compared to Kuna's 44.5, and a Notice of Intent to Award has been issued. The contract is being finalized to align the work with the Whittier Moves Transportation Master Plan.

For the MARAD Port and Infrastructure Development Grant, the City is applying for \$4.5 million in planning and design funds for the Delong Dock project, with a \$950,000 match identified in the FY2025/26 budget. The application is approximately 75% complete, with strong letters of support from Huna Totem, Chugach Native Corporation, Prince William Sound Economic Development District, Alaska DOT&PF, Alaska Marine Lines, Chugach School District, and the Alaska Municipal League.

The Buckner Building RFQ for brownfield cleanup closes on August 13. Staff will form an evaluation committee to score proposals and continue working with the EPA to finalize the budget and task list for the \$5 million in CDS funds allocated to the project.

The Whittier Moves Transportation Master Plan advanced in July when DOWL and AK DOT&PF installed traffic cameras and hosted public engagement events. Approximately 450 survey responses have been received from in-person activities and online submissions.

The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) for Whittier Moves has been established, with representation from the City, state agencies, tribal corporations, private industry, and local residents. The first meeting will be held September 12 at the Whittier School gym, alongside youth engagement activities and a public open house.

Finance Department Report

During the 2024 annual financial audit, auditors identified a significant deficiency in harbor billing internal controls. They were unable to replicate the billing system's methodology for pro-rating, and staff could not adequately explain it due to the retirement of the harbor finance manager on the day the audit began. The City's new harbor finance manager has since mastered the billing system and confirmed that the original pro-ration methodology was correct. She can now explain how the system calculates charges for partial-month moorage based on days stayed, vessel size, rate, and methodology. Combined with planned software upgrades, online payment capabilities, reduced integration complexity, and trained staff, we expect auditors to note improvements in internal controls.

The Shotgun Cove Road project has moved forward with the execution of a contract with Quality Asphalt Paving for construction from Mile 2.0 to 3.0. Funded by more than \$10 million in federal and Denali Commission funds, the work is expected to be completed by the end of the 2026 construction season. The final phase from Mile 3.0 to 4.0 will require additional grant applications, but the project's high ranking on the US Forest Service's national priority list positions it well for future funding.

The Water Well Replacement Project has been approved for a \$3.5 million State DEC loan with full forgiveness, with construction anticipated in Spring 2026. A potential USDA grant/loan combination has also been awarded to address possible cost overruns.

The City has been awarded \$1.59 million in federal funding for Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements to upgrade lift stations, dispose of sludge, add disinfection, and complete other critical system enhancements.

Other ongoing grant efforts include Harbor Phase III replacement, Buckner Building remediation, cybersecurity upgrades, police radios, ALPAR, completion of Lift Station No. 5, and continued work on the Shotgun Cove Road project.

Through June 30, 2025, General Fund revenues stand at 38.4% of budget, while expenditures are at 44.6%. Sales tax revenue is up \$146,470 year-over-year due to the shift to year-round collection. Ambulance fees have increased by \$25,797, offset by reductions in fish tax receipts and National Forest Service PILT payments. The year-to-date deficit of \$605,314 is better than the budgeted deficit of \$707,015.

Cruise Ship Passenger Vessel (CPV) tax revenue is at \$1,156,735 versus a budget of \$1,625,000. This shortfall is timing-related, and the full-year impact of the Huna Totem cruise terminal will be evident in FY2026.

The Water/Wastewater Enterprise Fund shows revenues at 45% and expenses at 22%, while the Harbor Fund shows revenues at 66.6% and expenses at 30.2%. Phase III construction will likely reduce moorage revenues later this year and into 2026. The Delong Dock Fund has minimal activity, with bankruptcy-related asset issues still unresolved.

City Clerk's Report

The Clerk's office continued work on cybersecurity upgrades, coordinating with ACS for the installation of new network switches and firewalls. Planning for the AAMC conference progressed, including the development of an exhibitor and sponsor registration process and coordination of an interactive elections panel.

An updated candidate nomination packet for the October 2025 election has been released, and recruitment efforts continue for the Planning & Zoning Commission and the Port & Harbor Advisory Commission. Work also advanced on an RFQ for records digitization, along with customization of the State's records retention model to better fit Whittier's operational needs. Outreach efforts have supported both the Whittier Moves and Whittier Economic Development Planning initiatives.

Harbor Department Report

The Harbor team completed collection of the second-half moorage contracts for the 2025 season. The draft Waterfront Economic Development Plan has been released for public comment through September 10.

Upgrades to financial and operational systems are ongoing, including integration of QuickBooks and MarinaGO point-of-sale, with staff training toward QuickBooks certification. New digital power meters have been installed, improving billing accuracy, and waste management has improved with the addition of a 15-yard dumpster at the head of the bay, reducing overflow incidents.

All permits for Phase III harbor construction have been secured, with mobilization scheduled for mid-September. The Harbor also hosted USGS personnel to scout locations for landslide monitoring equipment on Maynard Mountain.

Police Department Report

The Police Department responded to 535 calls for service in July, including 273 in Whittier, 247 in Girdwood, and 15 in other areas. The majority of these calls were officer-generated security checks.

Traffic enforcement remains active, with 29 citations issued for speeding and parking violations. Enforcement continues to focus on areas with identified safety concerns.

Officer Lloyd Willis earned his Alaska Basic Police Certificate this month, adding to his 15 years of prior law enforcement experience outside the state.

Fire Department Report

Whittier Fire/EMS responded to 32 calls in July: 23 EMS, 7 fire/hazardous materials, and 3 rescues, plus 5 walk-ins. The department supported July 4 festivities by providing fireworks safety coverage, hosting a pancake breakfast, and offering activities for children.

Additional community assistance included vehicle lockouts, tire air, and coordination with probation officers. The department continues its partnership with The Children's Lunch Box, providing 196 meals in July to children and community members in need. Volunteers remain a critical part of the department's success.

Public Works Monthly Report

The Public Works and Water/Wastewater Department focused this month on seasonal preparations, preventive maintenance, inspections, and advancing key projects. Winter preparations for all equipment are complete. The Department of Public Safety performed preventive maintenance and minor repairs on police cruisers, including brake work and servicing three vehicles. The Fire and EMS divisions continued addressing minor equipment deficiencies.

Annual operational tasks included street sweeping, brush cutting, manhole and drainage inspections, hydrant and valve checks, and required DMR/EPA reporting.

Major construction efforts advanced, including the Second Salmon Run to Emerald project, with QAP mobilizing on August 18, 2025, for completion in fall 2026. The segment above Lou Young Park will be closed from August 18 to November 1, reopening for winter recreation. The Finance Department has reapplied for the \$28 million Tribal Land Access Grant and is awaiting a response. The Whittier Core Upgrades project remains in the design phase, targeting storm system replacement, water and sewer extensions, pavement replacement, ADA-compliant sidewalks, right-of-way and easement validation, and resolution of operational issues.

In sanitary sewer operations, work on Lift Station #5 is complete with final punch list items underway. The City secured a \$300,000 EPA grant through VSW for technical memorandums addressing debris removal from four septic cells and assessing testing/treatment needs for the 301H permit renewal. CRW has been selected to prepare the permit renewal, develop grant applications, and create a plan for sediment removal.

For water operations, the Water Well Improvement Project, funded by a \$1.23 million CDS grant, is moving forward. The City is working with USDA on a grant/loan package and coordinating with VSF and SRF to secure an additional \$3.5 million. Whittier also received a \$75,000 grant from EPA, ADEC, and SRF to purchase a 100kVA emergency portable generator, with procurement specifications in development.