

To: Whittier City Council  
From: City Manager Jackie C. Wilde  
Re: City Manager Report for July 2025 Council Meeting

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The City of Whittier's July's report captures significant progress and critical updates across multiple departments, showcasing the city's continued commitment to infrastructure development, financial accountability, and community engagement.

### Manager's Monthly Wilde Recognition

The *Manager's Monthly Wilde Recognition* highlights departments and employees who exemplify teamwork, public service, and dedication to Whittier. For July, the **Whittier Fire Department** is recognized for its visible leadership and cross-department support. Chief Cates, Deputy Chief Nic Cooley, and Lieutenant Zack Overmyer have demonstrated exceptional commitment to safety and service, making a lasting impact on the community.



- Staff continued work with legal counsel and contractors on the ARRC land purchase, aligning negotiations with Council direction and preparing to secure priority parcels that will support Whittier's long-term infrastructure goals.

- Work continued with Ramos HR on policy alignment, handbook updates, and ensuring consistent HR practices across departments.
- Staff continued work on the Whittier Moves Transportation Plan, coordinating with consultants and stakeholders on timelines, funding strategies, and community engagement to guide multi-modal transportation improvements, harbor and upland circulation, and safety as Whittier grows.
- Staff worked with the Whittier Chamber of Commerce on Fourth of July events, including fireworks, pancakes, and a community parade. Thank you to all who organized and participated.
- Preparation is underway for an RFQ and RFB for city playground equipment installation, door and window repairs and replacements, and installation of new playground equipment to enhance community spaces.
- **Assistant City Manager Monthly Report**

The Request for Qualifications for the cleanup of the Buckner Building and contaminated sites has been posted, with a site walkthrough on July 9 and proposals due July 24, 2025. The Request for Proposals for the Federal Highway Administration Safe Streets for All Action Plan is also posted, with proposals due the same day.
- The City Manager and Assistant City Manager will attend the EPA Brownfields Conference in Chicago, August 5–8, fully funded by grant resources supporting Whittier’s \$5.8 million brownfield cleanup projects. A post-conference debrief will be provided to Council.
- Staff continue to coordinate with DOT&PF on upcoming projects along Portage Highway and within Whittier, including exploring historical signage and a potential walking tour. DOT&PF has committed over \$102 million in regional projects benefiting the Seward Highway, Portage, Tunnel, and Whittier.
- The DOWL team will be in Whittier on July 15 to install traffic cameras for the Transportation Master Plan and will host pop-up community input events on July 16, with a public open house planned for September.
- Anne Osooso joined the City as the new full-time receptionist at City Hall and is training in her role as the first point of contact for visitors.

### **Finance Monthly Report**

- A detailed Finance report will follow separately, including budget tracking, grant match updates, and Q4 FY25 expenditure trends.

### **City Clerk Monthly Report**

- The Clerk’s Office continues its core work on elections, policy updates, and recordkeeping to ensure clear and accountable City operations.
- To strengthen digital security, multi-factor authentication (MFA) is being implemented across City systems, adding a second layer of protection for staff accounts. This upgrade is supported by a cybersecurity grant, which also allows the City to purchase upgraded network equipment. Staff can learn more by viewing this [short Microsoft MFA video](#).
- The draft Election Code, submitted in January, is still under legal review. Proposed updates will modernize procedures for absentee voting and ballot handling ahead of the October election. Residents are encouraged to consider running for office or supporting civic-minded neighbors to strengthen local democracy. The Clerk will also facilitate an Elections Panel at

the upcoming Alaska Association of Municipal Clerks conference to bring back best practices for Whittier.

- The administrative chapter of the City Code is scheduled for Council introduction this month, with additional updates in progress to establish a Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and address Planning and Zoning vacancies. These changes reflect the City's commitment to responsive governance.
- Records retention work continues, with legacy files sorted and indexed. The next phase will establish a schedule to ensure staff and elected officials can trace decisions and meet legal requirements.
- The Clerk recently earned membership in the National Association of Parliamentarians, supporting effective and fair Council meetings through continued training in Robert's Rules of Order.

### **Harbor Monthly Report**

- Administration staff are collecting the second installment of preferential and annual moorage fees, with collections currently at approximately 75 percent. The deadline for payment is August 15.
- The Waterfront Economic Development Plan will be released to the public during the week of July 7, with a public meeting planned in Whittier on July 23.
- In June, harbor leadership met with Scribble Software and QuickBooks representatives to discuss migrating from outdated desktop versions to cloud-based systems. QuickBooks Cloud has been licensed, and Anivia is working to familiarize herself with the platform and begin implementation. This process is in the early stages but is progressing.
- The Harbormaster attended the Alaska Harbormasters and Port Administrators monthly online meeting and participated in two additional meetings focused on Phase III harbor construction.
- Under the RE-VEEP Grant for harbor boardwalk and launch ramp lighting, Consolidated Engineering has ordered the light fixtures, and the City is awaiting delivery. Supply chain issues continue to cause delays.
- In operations, staff have completed the replacement of all analog electrical meter readers with new digital meters. Technicians are expected to arrive in late July to complete installation and programming of the stand-alone computer system.
- Trash volume continues to challenge harbor operations. A 15-yard dumpster has been placed at the head of the bay for use by restaurant partners in the harbor district, with a request that these businesses use this dumpster rather than the smaller 8-yard dumpsters in the harbor area. With additional small trash cans placed throughout the harbor and city, capacity is limited, and an update on the effectiveness of this change will be provided next month.
- Regarding Phase III construction, the public input period for permitting closed on July 8. There is no update yet on permit status. BMI reports that floats are being cast with anticipated shipping in late August. Puffin Electric reports that pedestals, transformers, lighting, and light stands are being shipped. Harris Sand and Gravel arrived on July 3 to remove another barge load of old floats from the head of the bay, with one or two additional loads anticipated to complete the removal.
- Staff continue to work on Whiskey Float, which will require dive operations to complete replacement and refloating. The City Float crane passed its annual OSHA safety inspection in June.
- Bears have returned to the harbor and have been foraging on shrimp bait, requiring continued awareness from staff and visitors.

### **Police Department Report**

- In June 2025, the Whittier Police Department handled 510 calls for service.
- Two Valdez dispatchers conducted a site visit in Whittier, where Whittier Police and Whittier Fire/EMS provided a tour of the facilities and the community. The dispatchers also toured the AAMT Tunnel Control Center. Following their visit, they left with a better understanding of the community's unique layout, and the department looks forward to welcoming additional dispatcher visits in the future.
- The Independence Day weekend and Forest Fair 2025 were successfully managed, with Whittier Police providing coverage in both communities. No major incidents were reported during these events.
- There has been an increase in black bear sightings since last month. Residents and visitors are urged to exercise sound judgment while recreating in Whittier. When hiking or walking, it is important to remain aware of your surroundings, hike in groups, keep children within sight, keep dogs on a leash or leave them at home, make noise in dense cover, and carry bear spray.
- When walking with dogs, dogs should remain leashed and should not chase or interact with bears. If a bear is encountered while walking a dog, it is advised to back away and leave the area calmly.
- For camping and boating, maintaining a clean camp or boat is essential. Food scraps or trash should not be burned in fire rings or grills. Food, trash, clothes worn while cooking, and toiletries should not be stored in tents or boats and should instead be placed in approved bear-resistant containers, locked vehicles, or suspended at least ten feet above the ground and ten feet away from tree trunks, as local regulations require. Cooking should take place downwind and as far from tents as possible, with camps set up away from dense cover and natural food sources to reduce the likelihood of bear encounters.
- Below are two excellent sites with information and resources regarding safely dealing with bears (above information was gathered for this sites):  
<https://bearwise.org/> and <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/bears/safety.htm>
- Whittier Police have increased their parking and speeding enforcement in Whittier. We urge everyone to please follow the posted speed limit signs and remind everyone the posted speed limit on Whittier Street from Whittier Seafoods to Anchor Inn is 10 miles per hour.
- Please, park in the designated parking areas in the harbor area and on Whittier streets. Additionally, as a reminder, there is no overnight parking on Shotgun Cover Road, Lu Young Park or Head of the Bay. These areas are all designated day use areas only.

### **Fire/EMS Monthly Report**

- In June, Whittier Fire/EMS responded to a total of 30 calls for service. These included 21 EMS calls, six fire or hazmat calls, three rescue calls, and four walk-ins.
- Beyond emergency response, the team remained actively engaged with the community. A successful pancake feed was hosted at the station, with many residents attending in support. The department participated in swimming supervision and water rescue training at Smitty Cove to strengthen readiness for water emergencies. Several medical disposal kits were distributed to help the community safely dispose of medical waste. Staff assisted with tire repairs, air refills, and vehicle jump-starts and responded to multiple lock-out situations to support residents and visitors.



- The department assisted community youth in building boats for the upcoming Wish-wash event and distributed bicycles and helmets to local youth, sponsoring several to attend Coastal Connections Camp as part of continued youth outreach efforts.
- The partnership with The Children's Lunchbox continues, providing meals to children and individuals in need. This month, 123 meals were provided, and anyone in need is welcome to stop by the station between 9 AM and 5 PM for a free meal.
- Thank you to our dedicated personnel and to the Whittier community for supporting these efforts.





# City of Whittier Fire/EMS Department Yearly Statistics 2025



	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec																		
	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Time	Shift																		
	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C	A B C																		
EMS/Medical	5	1	1	5	1	1	4	5	6	5	2	11	4	1	8	12														
Fire	3			2			2			5			6	1		6														
Rescue				2			2					1			1	2														
Walk-In	1			2			3	2		4	1		3			4														
Transport out of Whittier					2	1		1	1	1	1	2			3															
After hrs call duty phone						1								4		2														
Out of Service Area				1			1						2																	
Sub-total	0	8	1	1	10	1	1	9	0	5	11	5	2	20	5	1	15	14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Totals	9			12			10			21			27			30			0			0			0			0		
Community Outreach																														
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec																		
	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B	Time B																		
Station Tours	2	7	8	11	25	40																								
Meals Provided	50	33	24	11	118	123																								
Other	1	5	6	8	9	11																								
Totals	53	45	38	30	152	174	0	0	0	0	0	0																		

109 Total calls for service  
17 Calls for cruise ship passengers  
16% of all medical calls cruise ship related

Time  
A - 0000-0800  
B - 0800-1800  
C - 1800-2400

## Public Works Monthly Report

- Throughout June, the Public Works and Water/Wastewater Department focused on routine seasonal operations, equipment maintenance, and preparations for the upcoming Fourth of July holiday while advancing several capital projects supported by secured and pending grant funding.
- The department completed annual street sweeping, brush cutting, manhole and drainage inspections, hydrant and valve checks, EPA-required Discharge Monitoring Reporting, and seasonal sewer testing. Preparations are underway to ensure city infrastructure and facilities are ready to support Independence Day activities.
- In equipment operations, Public Works completed hydraulic and electrical repairs on the skid steer and addressed repairs to the grader cylinder. The Department of Public Safety completed preventative maintenance and minor electrical and brake repairs on four police cruisers. Fire/EMS staff continued to address minor deficiencies in department equipment.
- The City continues to demonstrate leadership in securing funding for infrastructure improvements. The Water Well Improvement Project, supported by a \$1.23 million CDS grant, remains active. Finance and the Water Department are working collaboratively to pursue a USDA grant and loan while coordinating with the Village Safe Water and State Revolving Fund programs to supplement project funding. City management and the City's lobbyist continue to identify additional funding opportunities. Meanwhile, the \$75,000 grant awarded in March from the EPA, ADEC, and SRF for a 100kVA emergency portable



generator is advancing to the procurement stage, with specifications and solicitation documents being finalized.

- Progress continues on the Shotgun Cove Road project, where bids for construction from Mile 2.0 to Mile 3.25 were received on June 20. QAP is the apparent low bidder, and a contract award recommendation has been submitted for Council consideration. This project is fully funded with \$1.8 million from Western Federal Lands, and the City has secured an additional \$900,000 in gap funding from the Denali Commission. The City's application for a \$28 million Tribal Land Access Grant remains under review.
- Planning for the Whittier Core Upgrades project is ongoing. This project will address storm system replacements, future-proof water and sewer systems, reconstruct pavement, add ADA-compliant sidewalks, validate rights-of-way and easements, and address long-standing maintenance needs in Whittier's core infrastructure.
- On the wastewater side, work on Lift Station #5 is nearing completion as the contractor finalizes punch list items. The EPA 301H discharge permit renewal process is also underway as part of the City's long-term wastewater planning. The City has finalized a \$300,000 EPA grant through Village Safe Water to fund two technical memoranda focused on removing debris from four septic cells and evaluating additional testing and treatment required for permit renewal. CRW Engineering has been retained to lead this effort, including developing a rough order of magnitude estimate for decanting and sludge removal and preparing new grant applications aligned with regulatory goals.

**Scenes from Whittier's Fourth of July:** From fireworks over the water to pancakes, parades, and neighbors gathering, thank you to everyone who made this day a celebration of community.

