

House Transportation Committee
January 29th, 2026

HB 216

Whittier-Alaska Railroad Land Transfer

Representative Ky Holland
House District 9
South Anchorage, Hillside, North Turnagain Arm, Whittier

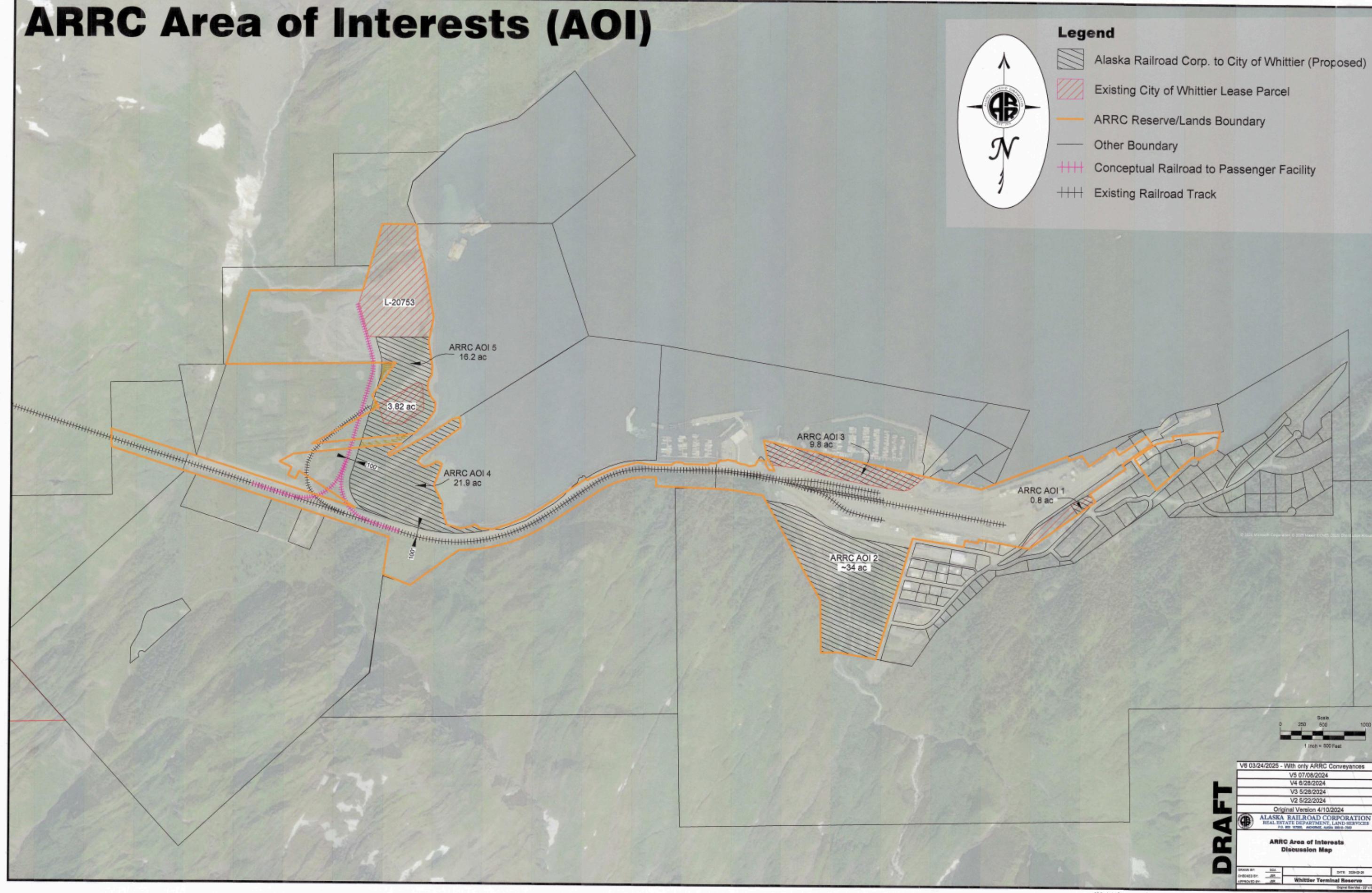
History: Whittier and the Alaska Railroad

- ▶ Whittier (pop. 272) connects Anchorage with Prince William Sound shipping and ferry routes, and is a popular cruise destination
- ▶ For most of its history, the Alaska Railroad was the only land route connecting Whittier with the rest of the state, via the the Anton Anderson Tunnel
- ▶ The Alaska Railroad has long benefitted from its significant land holdings within the city limits, which constitute 85% of Whittier's developable land
- ▶ In 1998, the Railroad agreed to lease 250 acres to the City for development

From a lease to City ownership

- ▶ The status of the land under the City's lease discourages investment and prevents the City from bringing in tax revenue from businesses situated on the property.
- ▶ Early in 2024, negotiations began for the transfer of ownership of five parcels of land from the Railroad to the City.
- ▶ In December of 2025, the City Council authorized the City Manager to negotiate a final agreement for three parcels, and the Railroad submitted a conditional letter of intent to proceed with the sale.
- ▶ Legislative approval is a critical element required to allow this deal to proceed: under AS 42.40.285, the Railroad is prohibited from relinquishing land without the authorization of the legislature.

ARRC Area of Interests (AOI)



Section 1

- ▶ Authorizes the Railroad to transfer the five parcels to the city for fair market value per AS 42.40.285
- ▶ Describes the five parcels authorized for transfer
- ▶ Recognizes that further platting and surveying is necessary to complete the exchange, subject to agreement by the parties
- ▶ Ensures that this section meets the requirements for dispensation of land under statutes governing the Railroad

Section 2

- ▶ Establishes an immediate effective date

A scenic view of a coastal town nestled in a valley, with a range of snow-capped mountains in the background under a clear blue sky. In the foreground, there are green hills and a modern residential complex with colorful buildings. A marina with many boats is visible on the water. The image has a slight orange tint in the bottom right corner.

Questions?