


TRANSMITTAL MEMORANDUM

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TO: The Honorable Mayor & City Council Initials: 

FROM: Lacey G. Simpson, Acting City Manager File #: MGR25-280

DATE: April 25, 2025 Mtg. #: 05/01/25 NBd

RE: **Tourism Presentation - Listening Sessions Summary Report and Revisit Work Priorities**

As the City Council will recall, Tourism Manager Laurie Booyse organized a series of public listening sessions in the fall of 2024 aimed at receiving public feedback on a variety of visitor industry topics important to the industry and community. The listening sessions began in September and covered the following topics:

1. Attractions, Excursions & Passenger Dispersion
2. Downtown Businesses
3. Transportation for Visitors & Residents
4. Vehicular Traffic
5. Pedestrian Traffic
6. Infrastructure & Future Planning Needs

The sessions were well attended with regular participation. Ms. Booyse has compiled the findings of the listening sessions and survey and will give an overview to the City Council at the meeting of May 1, 2025, with recommendations on the ideas gathered and possible future changes.

In response to the outcomes of the surveys, I felt it would be an appropriate time for the City Council to revisit the tourism-related work priorities it established in 2023 prior to the hiring of a Tourism Manager. At the April 20, 2023, meeting, the City Council adopted a motion establishing the top work priorities for the City, including the below listed 10 tourism-related work priorities. The City Council should bear in mind that while these priorities were established in April of 2023, Ms. Booyse did not begin her position as Tourism Manager until September of 2023.

1. Fill the Tourism Manager Position
2. Complete an allocation study related to City resources tied to tourism
3. Complete an analysis for maximization of port and visitor revenues including rate-setting policy
4. Determine the best investment of CPV funds
5. Restructure transient tax to best support the Civic Center and community
6. Identify the best use of marketing investments relative to the funds given to the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau, encouraging off-season events, etc.
7. Clear policies for investment in tourism infrastructure and City/KPU infrastructure
8. Launching a Downtown Ambassador Program for enforcement and visitor experience
9. Address Ted Ferry Civic Center rates and usage plan
10. Analyze infrastructure and resource capacity related to visitor numbers

Since this time, additional tasks have been overseen by Ms. Booyse, including, but not limited to:

- Developing a draft Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the City and Cruise Lines International Association of Alaska (CLIAA)
- Organizing twice-annual meetings between the City and CLIAA pursuant to the draft MOA
- Administering new contracts for Port Dock and Food Vendor Lease programs
- Working with cruise industry partners to develop improved ways of moving people along the Port and through downtown
- Holding quarterly meetings with the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau to ensure their activities align with the funding agreement, as well as advising on changes to KVB funding requests to meet City Council goals
- Conducting research and recommendations on the needs and placement of a mobile restroom during the summer
- Administering the Youth Fundraising Booth Program

From my perspective, priority task numbers 1, 2, 6, 8, and 9 have been completed or are no longer relevant, giving some exception to the allocation study (number 2) in which the allocation methodology remains ongoing under the Finance Department. The remaining tasks are in progress and/or require further review and clarification by the City Council on the desired goal.

At this time, staff is requesting City Council discussion and concurrence on the remaining priorities and/or the inclusion of other priorities which may supersede the previously established tasks in importance or urgency. Following direction received from the City Council, staff will submit an updated work priorities list for the Tourism Manager at a future meeting for City Council review adoption.