



MEMO

Date: 11/8/23
To: Delilah Walsh
From: Laurie Booyse
Re: Port Dock Vendor Lease Program Feedback

Attached please find two reports in reference to the port dock vendor lease program for the City of Ketchikan.

The first report includes responses to the Port Dock Vendor Lease Program community survey that was open between 10/23/23 and 11/7/23. The survey link was available on the city website on the port page. The survey was advertised to the public via multiple channels including the city's Facebook page, the home page on the city website, the calendar of events on the city website, an email "e-blast" from the Ketchikan Visitors Bureau, press releases sent to Ketchikan area media outlets, a classified ad in The Local Paper, announcement at City Council meetings, and at the 11/1/23 listening session at Ted Ferry Civic Center.

The format of the survey included nine questions about the program, five open-ended questions and 4 multiple choice questions. The survey received 39 responses that were recorded by the online service Survey Monkey.

The second report is a summary of the comments shared at the 11/1/23 community listening session held at the Ted Ferry Civic Center. The listening session was attended by 35 community members where attendees were asked to share their comments and experiences on six of the questions contained in the community survey.

Question Responses

Question 1

From your perspective, what is the purpose of the dock vendor program currently operated by the City of Ketchikan?

The general consensus from both the survey and the in-person comments was that the purpose of the program is to afford local tour operators a venue to sell tour products to visitors who have not already booked a tour on the ship or who are traveling independent of cruise ships.

Question 2

As the community sets new records in cruise passenger visitation and visitors more frequently find and book tours online, is the dock vendor program still relevant?

From the online survey, almost 75% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while almost 21% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The overall response of the in-person listening session was that the program is still relevant due to various factors including that some guests still prefer to interact face-to-face with a live person when they arrive in town; independent travelers need a place to purchase tours when they are in town; weather changes can cause pre-planned tours to be cancelled and booth vendors can service visitors with last minute options; and some guests arrive with no plans and are looking for options.

Question 3

The City has an obligation to provide vending space on the Port of Ketchikan to private tour providers.

From the online survey 54% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while almost 40% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

Question 4

The City has an obligation to provide pick-up and drop-off space on the Port of Ketchikan to private tour providers.

From the online survey 72% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while almost 23% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The in-person listening session combined both of these questions to one topic. The response to question 3 was that “technically and legally, probably not”, but at this time visitors expect to arrive in a community and find local activity options. This program gives visitors a safe place to purchase activities. The general response to question 4 is that the city needs to find a safe way to move people off the port, and if this opportunity is given to tour operators who sell tours on the cruise ships, the same opportunity should be provided for independent tour operators.

Question 5

The City should compete with downtown landowners and provide space on the Port of Ketchikan for independent tour operator's storefronts.

From the online survey 36% of respondents either strongly agreed or agreed with this statement, while almost 38% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement.

The in-person listening session shared that there are currently no viable storefronts along the port that are available for rent to independent tour operators. This means there is no good location to reach guests as they arrive on the port.

Question 6

This question was posed in two different ways between the online survey and the in-person meeting.

ONLINE

Do you have suggestions for creating opportunities for independent tour and excursion businesses to engage with cruise ship passengers?

The responses to this open-ended question online were varied. Multiple respondents suggested expanding a tour hub by increasing the size of the KVB building to offer more space for information services and tour vendor opportunities. A couple respondents suggested creating a building on berth three for tour sales. Multiple respondents

suggested a centralized booking location with online kiosks where visitors could book available tours directly with operators. There were more suggestions that can be reviewed on the report.

IN-PERSON

Do you have ideas for improving the Dock Vendor Booth Sales Program?

The in-person listening session tour operators requested that booths be able to sell multiple tours from one booth. There was an agreement that lease holders and their employees should attend training programs that would include a port dock vendor meeting with the port as well ask customer service and regulation training for sales agents.

Question 7

What should be the priority for the dock vendor selection process?

From the online survey 49% of agreed with the statement “raise the most revenue as possible from dock vendor booth lease payments”, while 51% of respondents agreed with the statement “maximize the opportunities for new and emerging independent tour operators to establish a new business”.

Question 8

How can the dock vendor program support new and emerging independent tour operators?

From the online survey there were various suggestions such as keeping one booth only for new/emerging businesses; allowing lease holders to sell more than one products to help new businesses sell more tours; base rent on a percentage of sales; limit companies to only a five year lease to “wean them off the program”.

Question 9

Does the sealed bid process ensure equal opportunity? Why or why not?

From the online survey there are a variety of opinions. There appears to be a split between those who feel the process is not equal and would like to see a lottery or a request for proposal style bid, and those you feel the sealed bid is a good system because it awards the leases to those who can best pay for the space.

Summary

In summary from public comments, the overall sense from both the online survey and the in-person listening session is that the dock vendor booth lease program still has value to the community and the visitors. For purposes of safety and visitor experience, independent operators should continue to be allowed to pick-up guests on the port. Dock vendors should be allowed the opportunity to sell more than one product from their booths, which would give visitors more options as well as allow lease holders to support smaller/emerging tour companies by selling their tours. Most often suggested ways of improving the program were incorporating a mandatory training program for lease holders and their employees, and creating a larger “hub” that could offer more visitor information services and sales locations. The respondents were split almost evenly over the priority for vendor selection, and if the sealed bid process is the best way to choose who will receive leases.

Posing these questions to the community has allowed varied voices and opinions to be shared. Respondents often had strong opinions, and in some cases they admitted that they could not come up with “good answers”. During the in-person session the tour operators

in attendance were in agreement that they are willing to work with ports and harbors staff to improve the program and find solutions to issues and concerns of the community.

It is my recommendation that the program continue with the following suggestions:

- An additional listening session be scheduled before the bidding process begins to discuss program regulations and booth placement on the port.
- A trial period be established that would allow a test of lease holders selling more than one product. The trial period and parameters would be developed in collaboration with ports and harbors staff.
- A mandatory training program be developed to include a session with staff from ports and harbors, and customer service training for all leaseholders and their employees.
- Strict adherence to the rules and policies of the lease be enforced by ports and harbors staff, and lease holders will abide by those decisions.
- Any vacant vendor booths be staffed by KVB visitor information clerks who will assist in information distribution and visitor support.

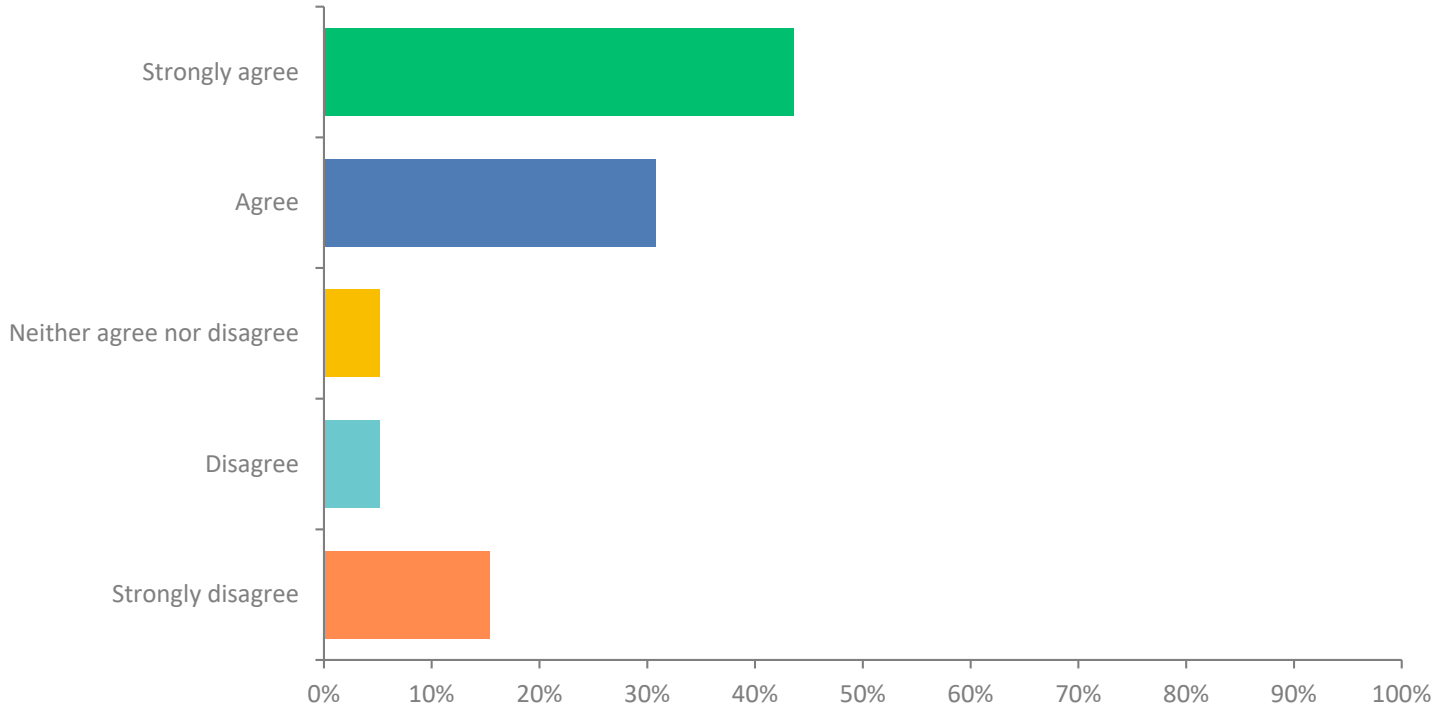


**Port Dock Vendor Lease Program
Community Survey
Survey open October 23 – November 7, 2023
39 responses**

Thursday, November 09, 2023

Powered by  SurveyMonkey®

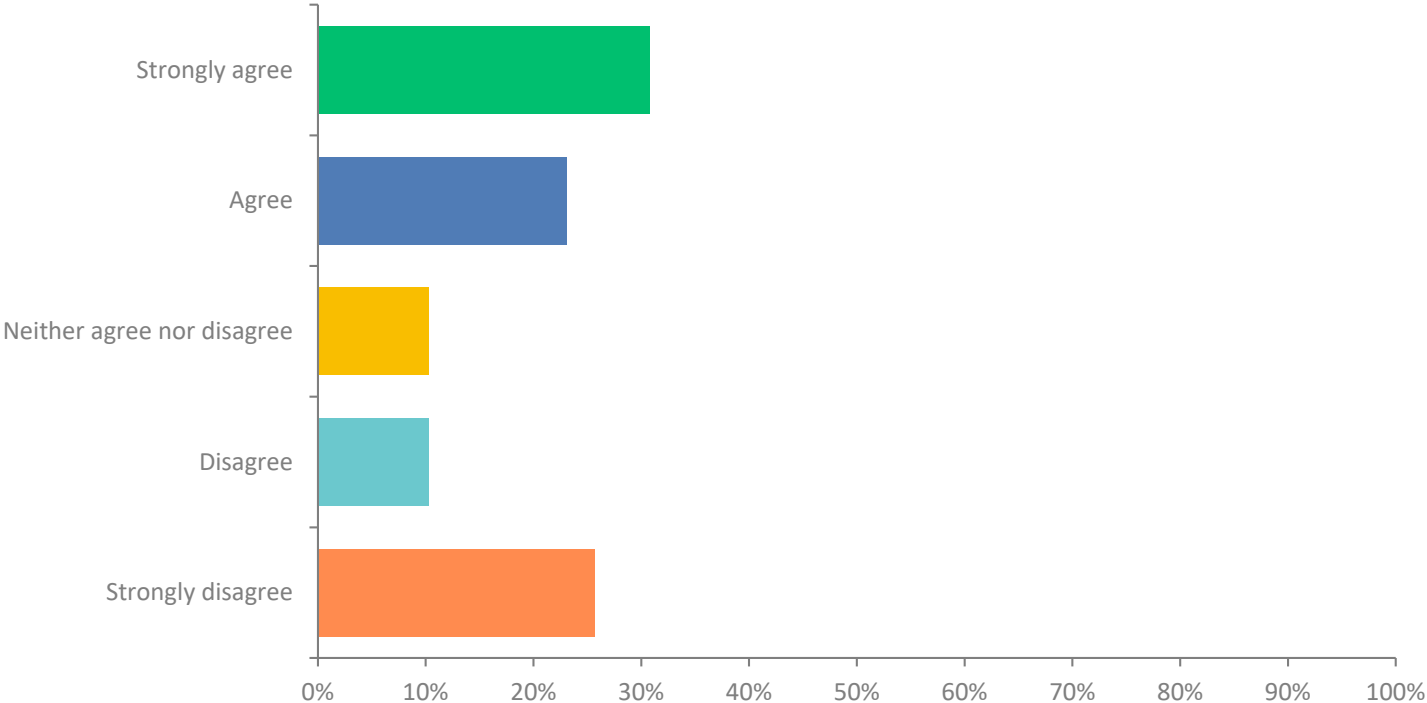
Q2: Do you agree with this statement: As the community sets new records in cruise passenger visitation and visitors more frequently find and book tours online, the dock vendor program is still relevant.



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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	43.59%	17
Agree	30.77%	12
Neither agree nor disagree	5.13%	2
Disagree	5.13%	2
Strongly disagree	15.38%	6
TOTAL		39

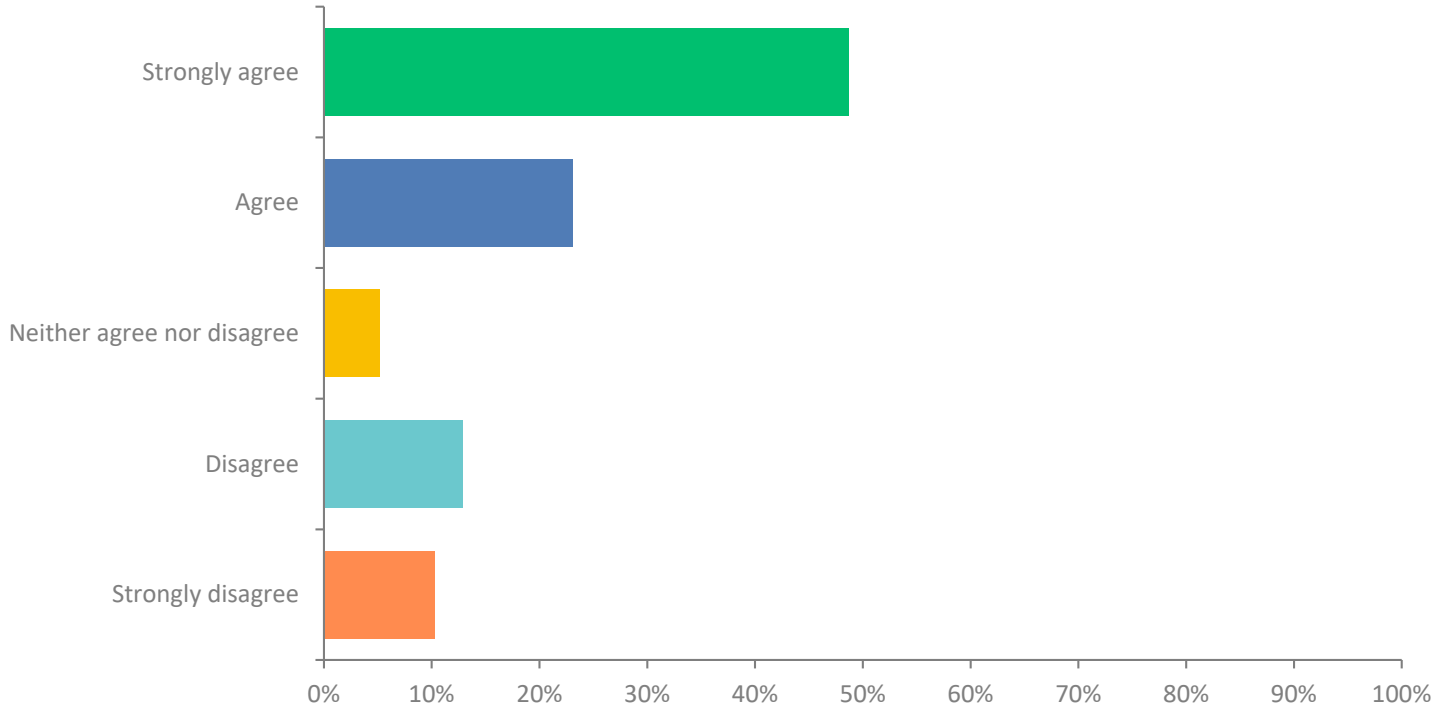
Q3: Do you agree with this statement: The City has an obligation to provide vending space on the Port of Ketchikan to private tour providers.



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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	30.77%	12
Agree	23.08%	9
Neither agree nor disagree	10.26%	4
Disagree	10.26%	4
Strongly disagree	25.64%	10
TOTAL		39

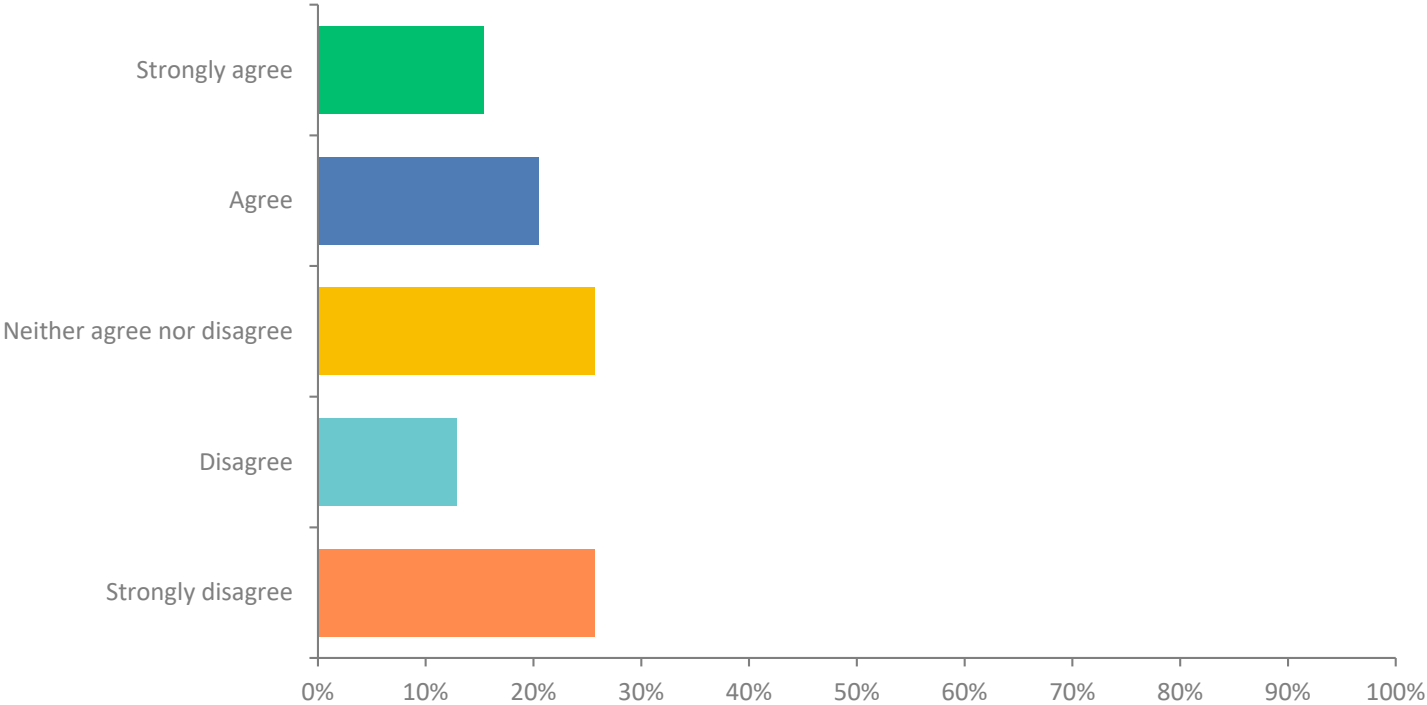
Q4: Do you agree with this statement: The City has an obligation to provide pick-up and drop-off space on the Port of Ketchikan to private tour providers.



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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	48.72%	19
Agree	23.08%	9
Neither agree nor disagree	5.13%	2
Disagree	12.82%	5
Strongly disagree	10.26%	4
TOTAL		39

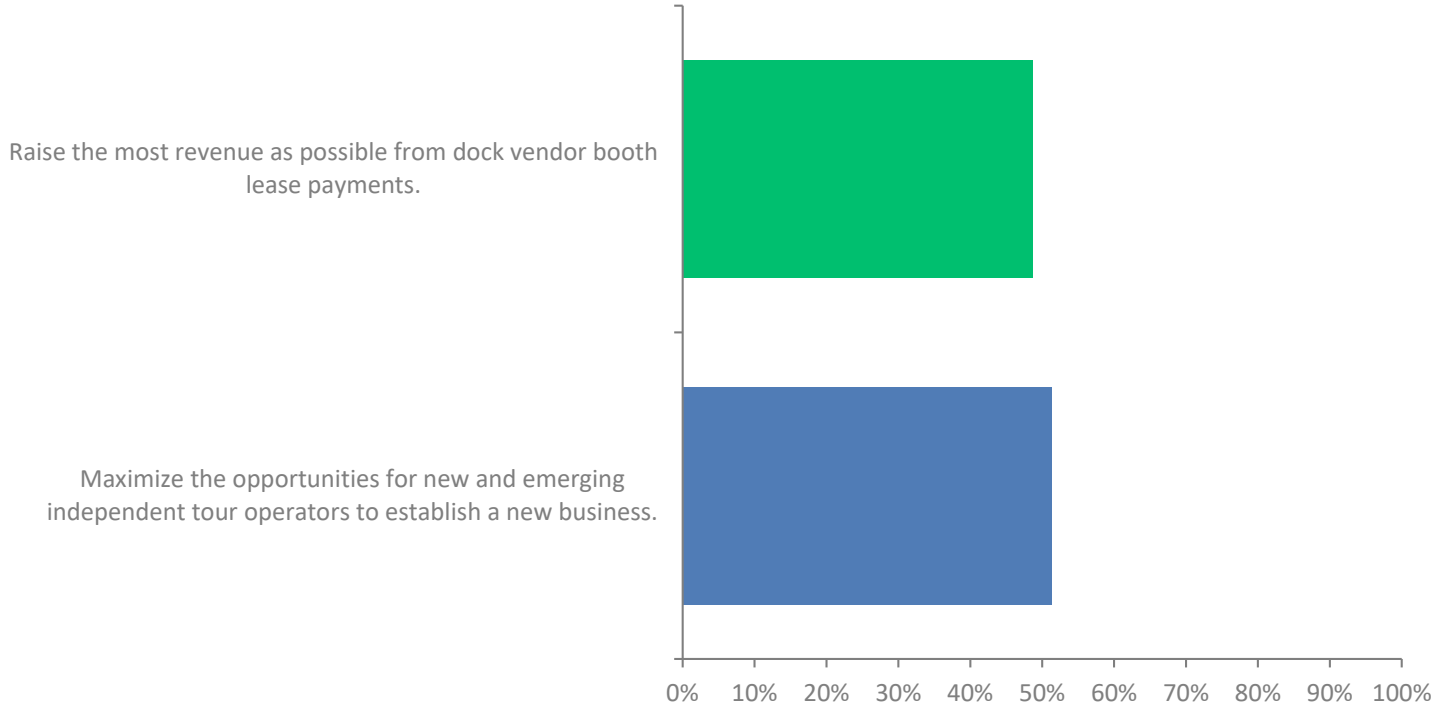
Q5: Do you agree with this statement: The City should compete with downtown landowners and provide space on the Port of Ketchikan for independent tour operator's storefronts.



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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Strongly agree	15.38%	6
Agree	20.51%	8
Neither agree nor disagree	25.64%	10
Disagree	12.82%	5
Strongly disagree	25.64%	10
TOTAL		39

Q7: What should be the priority for the dock vendor selection process?



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ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Raise the most revenue as possible from dock vendor booth lease payments.	48.72%	19
Maximize the opportunities for new and emerging independent tour operators to establish a new business.	51.28%	20
TOTAL		39

Q1: From your perspective, what is the purpose of the dock vendor program currently operated by the City of Ketchikan?

I think it does not promote local startups

To provide opportunities for learning and adventure for visitors, the heart of our economy, while simultaneously supporting local vendors and thus their staff economic opportunity as well as tax revenue from external sources (visitors) to enrich the City, Borough, and State and thus the Citizens in services and quality of life.

To allow local tour companies to sell tours

It enables Ketchikan citizens to benefit from cruise traffic and it enables cruise passengers to engage with something other than presold cruise packages.

To Provide opportunities for local Tourism businesses to sell their services to our cruise ship visitors such as wildlife, totem, fishing, flight seeing and other tours.

The purpose of the dock vendor program is to keep independent tour operators following rules and regulations while giving them an opportunity to sell their tours to customers within Ketchikan.

To build small business that benefits the community.

To raise money for the city and provide access to vendors.

To provide an organized, streamlined way to sell tours to cruise ship passengers without overwhelming them with unsolicited sales.

Local Infrastructure Local People work their jobs on the dock and bring money back into our community.

To offer the small local independent tour company a chance to compete with the larger tour companies and the cruise ship excursions. The programs name is ITO or independent tour operator and it was created to help level the playing field with the big tour companies , add revenue to city coffers and create local jobs

To offer tours to cruise ship passengers at an affordable prices many of whom do not book on the ship Also to provide extra funds for the city with the rents from the local tour companies The program was also created to help the local tour companies compete with the cruise ship companies

To give local tour operators a favorable place to sell their product

To provide local tour operators with the opportunity to bridge the gap/compete to sell their experiences in a market where unless you drop major \$\$\$ or have \$\$\$ agreements with cruise ships you are otherwise unable to directly interact with possible clients/tourists. It should be better managed to allow for diverse and inclusive experiences that best reflect the culture/history/uniqueness of Ketchikan.

To serve the visiting public; providing a mechanism for them to book tours that are not available on board their ship or were full when they tried to book beforehand.
Last minute independent tour sales, information disbursement to visitors.
The program allows for companies to sell tour activities for Ketchikan visitors. The facilities also provides information on venues, attractions, restaurants, and so on to visitors wanting further details.
To make money from tourism vendors
Historically it was created to help local tour operators who couldn't afford to have the ships sell their tours for a cut. It has since morphed into several multi million dollar businesses who seem to think that they are entitled to operating on our Port.
To provide a space for excursion vendors to have safe and equitable access to cruise visitors
To create a fair and equitable program for any and all businesses' to have the opportunity to sell their "products" to visitors on the City's port.
For visitors to be able to buy local tours and bring a lease income to the City.
There has been no purpose defined.
To allow local tour vendors to offer local tours to visitors.
The dock vendor booths make Ketchikan look and feel like Tijuana. They do not follow the rules of no hawking. I personally have had numerous incidents and problems with vendors over the years. Some of them are quite rude to other tour operators if we get in their line of sight of the passengers coming off the ships. They can be quite aggressive. It would be best if the program was eliminated and those businesses can go rent normal places of business to sell their tour products like the rest of us.
It increases opportunity for local tour companies to increase sells. It can boost economic exposure for the city. I do think LOCAL vendors should get first consideration. Not vendors who come in for the season and leave with the money.
It should be to provide a great experience for our guests. Easy access to great tours and attractions
To allow local vendors a place on the docks and to generate revenue for the port fund to help pay operating costs.
To provide a space for legitimate businesses to operate.
To assist guest who have saved to come to Alaska find a last minute excursion and have a great vacation.
It provides a platform for local tour operators to offer their tours to cruise ship passengers.
To maintain a vibrant and welcoming port aesthetic that allows visitors to experience our community as they walk off the ships. We need more booths set up for tours, handmade merchants, non-Profits rotating and more.

To provide independent tour access to the visitors on the dock.
Assist visitors to find an appropriate way to experience Ketchikan
To allow local businesses to sell tours, and to provide opportunities for visitors that did not book tours in advance.
To encourage the growth of new types of independent tours in Ketchikan and give opportunities to new local businesses entering into this market who may not yet have relationships with the cruise lines.
To provide Jobs and revenue for local tour operators.
The folks who occupy these booths all have something in common. They are problematic to Ketchikan. They take advantage of people who can't afford expensive tours, and take them to places they aren't allowed to go, drop them off in the middle of the highway, sneak them through the woods to federal and state land, and don't treat their employees or guests well. The booths enable their behavior and give Ketchikan a bad reputation. They all use the booths. Not one decent or safe operation uses them. The booths are an eye sore that allow people who shouldn't own business to get away with terrible practices to their guests, each other, and the land they misuse.
To sell cheap tours to passengers who haven't made other bookings.

Q6: Do you have suggestions for creating opportunities for independent tour and excursion businesses to engage with cruise ship passengers?

Too many cruise ships and people dwindle the experience. If I didn't live here I would not come because you corral and fleece attitude. Should be gone in late afternoons. All the people buses and cruise ships are hard on the environment (beaches , trails , roads and marine ways). Takes from the experience of coming here .. it has become all about greed

Expand the KVB building, improve signage at the Berth 3 KVB annex, add a small vendor structure perhaps with half a dozen booths at Berth 4, add small 4-6 booth single homogeneous structure at Berth 1

Have them promote online or rent spaces from businesses off the port

Have an addition to the Ketchikan promotional website listing all the independent tour and excursion businesses.

Keep the dock vendor program going as well as the KVB sales booths. Also allow tour sales on private property as is currently allowed. The KVB has sales booths and a waiting list for sales booths.

I believe a bigger tour hub like the KVB is something that could help engage passengers in learning about Ketchikan but also eliminate the traffic that is found on berth 2 especially. Currently that area is a huge hub for IND tour operators and the dock vendor booths. that area also already has the kvb in place. By having those booths out there you are creating more traffic in an area that does not have the room for that type of foot traffic especially when a ship is on berth 2. most of the operators who are in the dock booths also have booths within the kvb.

Better online resources. Not the City's responsibility to promote or subsidize any business. I think the program is a waste of time, materials, and money. Administrative and maintenance costs do not calculate out with the revenue generated.

Rent appropriate space for business like all other business owners. If we have to have them on the dock the city should maximize it's returns.

Find an equal opportunity and affordable way to engage small, independent operators along the downtown berths.

Booths are the best way to engage with individual cruise ship passengers.

Yes. We already have this, it's called the Ketchikan Visitors Borough and the six booths on the downtown docks called the ITO program set up over 25 years ago to address and accommodate exactly what this question asks. And to provide our visitors a another source for information on activities and services our tour

No new suggestions We already have the JVB And the city booths
Location is everything. Booth placement is critical. There is no point in having booths on Berth 2 because the KVB is there.
Instead of having all solid designated booths, allow one to be changed on a weekly basis throughout the summer to highlight the much smaller independent artists/opportunities. Many would not have the personnel/ability to staff a booth for the entirety of the summer, but if the City were to feature individuals/signal boost that way it would be more fair and allow many people to be involved.... From civic groups to other performers and whatnot... If the City is providing this space/support then the groups that take part should be held to a certain standard for providing factual and culturally relevant information to tourists.... There should be education and standards in place for tour operators that are supported or endorsed by the City. Whether that is going through a tour/education process through the Ketchikan Museums or other entity, there should be more education of tour operators, providers, guides.
If new to the industry they could partner in a booth with another vendor to share the cost of the space. To serve the visitor
The current booth arrangements offer great opportunities for the IND Tour and Excursion businesses. I think reducing the number of spaces within the KVB to 10 would enhance the experience for customers inside the KVB
If there is a location for vehicles to pick up/drop off and a storefront, it should be off the pier to reduce congestion and get visitors to walk through parts of town. Market the City of Ketchikan to all visitors regardless of their travel methods.
Require the cruise vessels to offer booking locations promote ALL private tours offered in the port. Not just the ones that they make money from or have agreements with. Provide a City sponsored website as a booking outlet for Ketchikan based tours and make booking kiosks available in and around City properties, such as the visitors center and dock locations
Any business operating in an ITO booth should not sell through the ships as per the original intent of the program.
The same as other private businesses - online access and a storefront (could be a co-op with others) vendors that provide authentic, highly rated tours that offer accurate information about our community
If space allows, add more vendor booths to better accommodate new and established businesses'

<p>Have one booth designated for small businesses that can share the space. We need a balance right now only large businesses have money to bid on dock booths, if you designate 1 booth for smaller businesses to share</p>
<p>Build a visitor center at berth 3 in the glass shelter</p>
<p>More booths.</p>
<p>I would recommend businesses rent a store front to operate from and put up a website and engage in normal marketing like the rest of us. The city needs to provide space for tour operators to pick up and drop off clients but to allow the vendor booth businesses to park on the berths while they solicit sales from their booths is unfair to the rest of us who need to pick up and drop off clients and there is little or no space available because of the vendor booth program. I gave up trying to park on the berths because of the vendor booth vehicles pigging space and then blocking you in with their vehicles that are not loading or unloading they sit there while the booth people sell the tickets. So I now park in general parking and walk my clients a farther distance to access my vehicles. It is unfair that the vendor booth vehicles are allowed to sit on the berth loading zones while they sell the tickets. My company that sells tickets in advance is put at a disadvantage because of the vendor booth businesses parking and sitting on the berths limited space for loading and unloading clients. Again they park and sit while they sell the tickets to fill the vehicle whereas my tickets are sold in advance and I can't find places to park my vehicles to load and unload clients. The vendor booth program creates unfair situations for other businesses. I was forced to check the box above so please note I do not think the city should maximize opportunities for new independent tour operators. No priority, please end the vendor program as it creates many problems and serves a few select businesses.</p>
<p>The city doesn't have an obligation, but it does have the opportunity to provide space. If there is available space, let them sell tours. Any sales boost the overall economy.</p>
<p>More spaces on the dock to sell. With the parking lot sales it is starting to look a hole lot like Mexico</p>
<p>None</p>
<p>Limit the amount of booths businesses can be associates in. Kick the trolley bully out of the kvb. Booth rent should not be on a sliding scale. Do not raise booth rent</p>
<p>Keep it how it is. We need the booths Ensure we give the guests traveling a great excursion and experience. Starts from the sales pitch</p>
<p>Ask the independent operators for their ideas as they are the experts in what they need to grow their businesses. Help the local businesses to be successful.</p>

<p>We have the KVB sites on the port for this purpose. The questions above were leading and showed that the city thinks the booths are unnecessary. To create a vibrant dock experience for visitors and locals to enjoy.</p>
<p>I think the current system works fine. I believe the ITO program should be operated by the same organization that runs the booths in the KVB building, i.e. the KVB. I think it should be a combination of the two rather than one or the other.</p>
<p>No</p>
<p>Yes</p>
<p>The KVB can work with them to invest in their online booking resources and encourage computer stations within the KVB where they can schedule their tours similar to how they do it at Ward Cove with the iPads.</p>
<p>Keep the dock vender program going.</p>
<p>Online bookings and utilize the visitor center better. Open the building to make it more approachable. Get rid of it</p>
<p>Turn the underutilized city-owned spaces at Berth 3 into an area for businesses to offer their services.</p>

Q8: How can the dock vendor program support new and emerging independent tour operators?
Giving them space
Rotation schedule.
Be more receptive to them.
Any local person has the right to bid on a sales booth and provide tours and services to our visitors.
I believe that they could give new and emerging ind tour operators a chance. Just like the guys who are currently in them once had. We spoke at the meeting a lot about the lease terms- most who were there were able to get a foot in the door when this program first started and helped them achieve their goals financially which has but them in a place today to compete with bigger companies and most out bidding the larger companies for space. New and up coming IND operators no longer have that opportunity due to the large amount of money to lease a booth. It would be nice to dedicate one of those booths to help the emerging IND operators get to a place where the established ones are already at.
Not allow the same vendors to BULLY their way into leases and the terms of the leases every year. It is ridiculous the amount of power the City's upper management gives the vendors when they admit, on record at council meetings, that they are colluding and violating their lease agreements. The council and management need to respect the P&H Director and their decisions. The same 6 dock vendors have had way too much power for too long.
Make it well informed, affordable, and supported, and provide training.
Every year I have worked on the dock there have always been six dock booths, this year you dropped us to five. If you want more independents, add our sixth dock booth next year. Help independents maximize revenue with one booth on Beth 1, one booth on the south side and north side of the KVB respectfully, and three on Berth 3. This is how you open up more room for the independents.
There is bidding system already in place where any small tour Company can bid on one of the six or (eight,if we expand the number of tour booths) on the city dock vender program, and there are twenty (20) booths available inside the Ketchikan Visitors Center, every year there are at least one or two booths available for small emerging tour operators to apply for. Applicants just need to register and apply for a booth
The bidding system already exists where any local tour company can bid on a city booth
Perhaps more booths. The long-term local sellers should not have to re-compete for space for unknown operators.
By providing a platform both physically on the docks and within the social media/promotional sphere...
I don't believe that is the purpose of the vendor program.

Allow vendors to sell more than just the products they own. An operator with one van should not have an entire booth leased to fill their one vehicle but I have no issue with another operator being compensated to help the new operator fill their van.
Structure fees differently, allow for more signage, change the rotation frequently
Provide marketing services and advertising space on the docks and in the visitors center, but provide guidelines on professionalism of media and advertising materials
By providing equitable access
Create a system where not only established businesses' can afford to submit a winning bid.
Have 1 designated booth for small businesses to share.
Dock vendor program is not for that. Kvb booths are more for that.
That's going to take a longer conversation.
Why does the city feel the need to support a select group of businesses with this program that makes our community look and feel greedy to our visitors. There are many ways for a business to market tours, by having a store front (privately owned), by maintaining a web site and answering the phone. These businesses are basically soliciting on city property when their are city ordinances in place that prohibit everyone else from soliciting on city property. There are businesses that sit on the dock with signs in their vehicle windows that say "for hire" which I do believe is against city ordinance and no one stops them. There is little to no enforcement of the rules for dock vendors. Those of us, business owners who maintain store fronts and offices, websites and marketing programs, are put at a disadvantage by the dock vendor program. And then when we escort our booked clients past the vendor booths they hawk at my customers. I am tired of having to apologize to my clients for the bad behavior of the vendor booth employees hawking them as we walk by.
If there is limited dock space, do a random drawing for the space each year. All companies would have an equal opportunity to gain a space. If they don't get selected, they can rent out space elsewhere, like in previous years.
In Juneau there is ample spaces to sell to guests on the dock. More spaces would provide more money for the city at a more reasonable price. We had 6 and now we have 5??
Rent should be a percentage of sales.
Let there be more than one tour company in the booth
Ask them .
We shouldn't be targeting old or new businesses and it should just be fairly set and at a fair rate. No closed bids. Keep it transparent.
this year one of the booths wasn't bid on. That indicates there isn't significant unmet interest.
Set aside two to three booths for emerging vendors

Have a minimum entry price (like \$5000 per month); only make it available if they don't have booths or storefronts anywhere else; find a more fair way to select the dock vendors not just benefitting the wealthiest; limit the number of years they can be a dock vendor to 5 years as if they are good they should be able to wean off the program.

They have the same right to submit a bid as anyone on the dock.

Support people who run good operations. Penalize the ones who run bad ones.

Set up a rotating schedule for multiple businesses, rather than selling rights to the booths to specific operators.

Q9: Does the sealed bid process ensure equal opportunity? Why or why not?
No , the cost is so heavy / high. I think the city should provide space for food trucks on a first come first served basis. With no reserved space
Neither historical nor proposed options are optimal. The REAL solution is to provide adequate vendor space to ALL interested parties. ADD MORE VENDOR SPACE.
No. Make it public knowledge.
Having a sealed bid process is subject to insider cheating, I feel a lottery would be more fair.
in America it is as fair as it can get, its a clean and level playing field
No. If you are not established and do not have the finances for these booths you will never have chance the bids.
No, because the reoccurring vendors OPENLY ADMIT-- ON RECORD, THEY COLLUDE WHEN BIDDING! To be exact, Steve McDonald admitted to it at the podium. That does not give anyone not in their "circle" a fair chance.
It seems to be a fair way but I would suggest giving vendors a minimum bid.
I have no idea how this works or when. Never have been informed about or invited to participate in this process.
Yes, It ensures everyone has a chance to bid without any complaints. (No different than a silent auction.)
Yes, any small tour company can offer whatever they think is a fair price. There are opportunities. However I think there should be more opportunities to benefit small local businesses to grow and develop , creating jobs and contributing to a better community here. I saw what our town went through with Covid and the loss of tourists and revenue here. It was devastating to our local business community, residents and city coffers. The tourists are back and we are all grateful, as a welcoming small community we should do all we can to help and support our small dedicated tour companies who are often the first to engage with our guests. Whether it be to offer a local tour, answer a question, Or provide directions, these tour companies will be grateful for the city's support of the Dock Vendor Program.
Yes This gives every tour company the opportunity to place a bid for a dock booth
The sealed bid process is ridiculous. The more you pay, the more likely you are to win. This certainly isn't encouraging of anyone new coming around. NO one can afford some of the rents that have been bid. Current vendors should be given priority IF THEY FOLLOW THE RULES. Perhaps booths that are slightly larger that 2 companies of DIFFERENT kinds of businesses could share.
No. It should be treated more like an RFP, where entities are all allowed to submit their bids/proposals and then the merits of those applications are judged based on what they would contribute to the overall ethos - sharing information/providing experiences - rather than just who can bid the highest. Have them apply just like any other RFP and have it be determined on a rubric of what they in-turn contribute, not just who is bidding the highest to have the spot...

<p>Unfamiliar with the process. The City has been doing this for a long time; what other ideas have been shared from the dock users and those that feel they are unable to compete for a space?</p>
<p>There is no perfect solution but I also think you can look back on who bids on the booths and we are not really leaving anyone out that would not only benefit from the booths but provide the service the booths should be providing by always being open when a ship in port with information and tours available.</p>
<p>No, the booths should just have set fees and companies should be assigned based on a lottery.</p>
<p>No, if you're new and trying to get established, you cannot afford to bid against well established tours. Additionally, if you're new and have never bid, the price range isn't made obvious.</p>
<p>No, because the historic winners have stated on the record that they collude with each other even though they sign an agreement attesting to the fact that they will not.</p>
<p>Every vendor has the opportunity to bid for space so that seems equitable if the the selection is based only on the highest bids.</p>
<p>Small businesses can't compete with large ones.</p>
<p>Yes. Everyone bids what they fill they can afford. Would like to see a set minimum though.</p>
<p>I believe so. It allows the vendors decide what they can afford or think the location is worth the expense. I think the above statement about the city "competing" with local land owners to be misleading. Only the city has the locations that provide the most convenient for cruise visitors.</p>
<p>No it does not. The dock vendor program has long served a few select businesses that provide low level or low quality tours in vehicles that are old and aged and very likely unsafe and under insured. This is evident by the number of these vehicles we see broken down on the side of the road. One accident that hurts or kills people reflects upon the entire community, affects insurance rates in general and can impact tour sales for business selling similar tours. This is evident from the float plane crashes over the years. The vendors continually hawk people walking by and are aggressive to other tour operators. No one polices their activity. The vendor booth program creates situations that are unfair to other businesses. Because of the vendor booth program parking and picking up clients on the berths is a nightmare. Please end the vendor booth program. It will help immensely to improve parking on the berths, which is more and more stressed as each year goes by and will make our community much more friendly to our visitors. Eliminating the vendor booth program will be a positive move. Keeping it will allow these problems to continue at the expense of other businesses and our visitors.</p>
<p>Nope! There should be a set value to each location, and a ransom selection for the space. The new tour companies can't outbid those that have been around for 20years. The economic gain, is not just in the immediate rent. The city gains long term, through sales taxes, property taxes, etc. New vendors=more people=more year round purchases from locals. I think those who stay through winter should get priority. These vendors who leave with all the money coming in, does nothing for local economy</p>
<p>They need to be a set price. Make more oportertunities lower price and more money</p>

Yes..it seems to be the fairest way to do it..and it generates the most revenue for the port fund.
I would prefer a lottery system to be fair and give new businesses a chance
No, some big businesses can our bid small companies. It should be a flat rate, multiple companies in a booth with only 3 sales people per booth
I assume it does but it is not the best way. If I had a a business where I couldn't count on a place to sell my product every year, then how could I grow my business, invest in equipment and returning personnel, or create contacts throughout the industry. How can I have a sustainable business if I can't reasonably know that I will have a place to operate in the future? The seal bid process only drives up the price because people are scared they will lose their place to operate. I don't know if the operators can sell other companies tours out of their booth but maybe that's a way for emerging operators to gain a foothold. Local tour operator selling locations should be included in any future planning because the tourist to visit in Ketchikan would like a local tour operator as an option for them to purchase local tours, and not just have to purchase through with the cruise lines. It is a niche product that the city should encourage.
No. It limits entry and keeps some from trying at all.
It is hard to say if the current process limits the participation or not. We have had the same companies year in and year out, but this year one of the opportunities went unbid on.
It allows the most successful operators to out bid all others for space.
No, only the wealthiest vendors can participate and you'll never give opportunities to new start-ups.
Absolutely. Everyone has the right to bid. If you bid enough you get the booth. Absolutely fair.
Yes, but it's a small town and people will talk to each other.

NOTES

Date: 11/2/23

From: Laurie Booyse

Re: Dock vendor program listening session

Notes from 11/1/23 meeting at Ted Ferry Civic Center.

Attendees: 35

Start time: 6:00pm End Time: 8:10pm

Question 1

From your perspective, what is the purpose of the dock vendor program currently operated by the City of Ketchikan?

- The program provides local jobs, it allows businesses to compete with the cruise lines, employees are the “face of the city” for visitors, creates revenue for city as well as the business and employees.
- The employees are “ambassadors” and the front line to give out information and answer questions.
- The booths provide first time jobs for kids in the community, it is a great way to train new workers for the city’s workforce.
- Gives visitors an option for less pricey tour opportunities, gives them choices in a price range that they may be able to afford and not just cruise ship prices.

Question 2

As the community sets new records in cruise passenger visitation and visitors more frequently find and book tours online, is the dock vendor program still relevant?

- Yes, sales metrics show that our company has bigger sales are on the dock than in the KVB booths.
- Yes, there are people coming off the ships looking for tours and things to do recommended by a local.
- Some guests would rather deal with an individual face to face.
- Independent travelers use the booths to find activities, hotels know where they can send their guests to find tours.
- If there are changes in the weather, either good or bad, visitors can find options to get out on a tour.
- If the cruise ship tours are sold out the booths can offer more options to visitors.
- The booth sales make more taxes for the city.
- Most sales are made the day of the tour.
- Some guests get lost online trying to wade through options. With the booths people can connect directly with a local when they are in town.
- With the large number of options promoted with “rich” companies, the small independent tour operator can get lost online.

Question 3

Does the City have an obligation to provide vending space and/or pick-up and drop-off space on the Port of Ketchikan for private tour providers?

- Technically and legally, “probably not” but the city council had the foresight to continue to support program.
- At this point, visitors expect to arrive in a community and be able to find local activities.
- In reference to pick-up and drop-off, this is a safety issue. Since the city has an obligation to keep port users safe, getting them off the port is the goal and the more that can be done to facilitate that the better.
- We need to find a safe way for people to experience town.
- City has set a precedent for how the system will work down there (on the dock) and they created the permit program. There is not an obligation but an expectation.
- If the city gives cruise ship tours space to pick-up and drop off, it needs to do the same for all operators.
- Port accessibility for all users is very important no matter their capability. This needs to be done safely and not forcing people to another part of town for pick-up and drop off is safer.

Question 4

Should the City compete with downtown landowners and provide space on the Port of Ketchikan for independent tour operator's storefronts?

- All viable storefronts are already taken. There is no space to reach guests as they arrive.
- Perhaps there is another location in town where tours can be sold in addition to booths so once people are farther into town they still have the option of buying tours.
- Ships need to distribute better maps and those maps could have sales locations listed.

Question 5

How can the dock vendor program support new and emerging independent tour operators?

- All operators, including new companies, have the right to bid through the bid process.
- New operators need to be invited and learn how to be a part of the process. Need a better way to communicate the process to all ITOs.
- Allow vendors to add more products from other companies to help the small companies.
- Need to allow vendors to advertise more products to help sell small ITO products.
- Need to define what is an independent operator.
- Reserve one booth for lottery of days or weeks for emerging businesses.
- Put new vendors together in a co-op.
- With all the problems we have right now with the program, the city should worry about the other questions before it takes on this issue.

Question 6

Do you have ideas for improving the Dock Vendor Booth Sales Program?

- Allow vendors to sell other tours and allow them to advertise these tours.
- Fix leaking awnings.

- Put some of the fees collected into a scholarship, or to a homeless program or some way to give back to the community. Can make it part of the bid/contract process.
- City offers a training for everyone working on the dock, with expectations and information, so everyone starts with the same level of knowledge.
- Have a required port dock vendor meeting the owners/managers.
- Create a "community savings fund" with the dock vendor booth fees that would be used for a tourism community fund to make things better like new benches, fix sidewalks, etc.
- I agree there should be a training for the sales agents to create a common knowledge base.
- Dock vendors should be trained on the KVB program (Alaska Host).

Received comment via voicemail:

Karen Stone commented that she works in the summer at Dolly's House and the vendor booths are very important to their success and are a necessity. 907-617-3846