

Candidate name

Mike W. Robbins

1. Describe your previous experience with Alaska tourism. Do you have any prior employment in the industry?

First, thank you for the question and the opportunity to speak to your membership through my answers to this questionnaire. During the past thirty years as an Alaskan business owner, I have partnered with many different businesses in the tourism sector. As a radio station owner, I have worked with fishing guides, tour operators, airlines, hotels and many others. I understand how the tourism industry contributes to our local and state economy and the importance of its role in our city. Additionally, I have experience at a higher level through my advertising firm, The Robbins Agency. Some clients we have worked with include, Lake Creek Lodge and Falcon Car Rental. I am also a past member of Visit Anchorage and Skai International USA.

2. Visit Anchorage ensures our community remains top-of-mind with visitors, meeting planners, and travel trade professionals. The work distinguishes our destination in a crowded, competitive landscape. Do you support Visit Anchorage's mission? Please explain your position.

I believe that the tourism industry is an important partner of the Municipality, and an important part of our economy. I believe the Municipality can support and partner with the tourism industry to foster growth and recovery, and it is critical that our city remains top-of-mind for visitors, meeting planners and travel trade professionals so the work can be done to rebuild and grow our economy.

3. Anchorage's 12% room tax supports municipal services in three ways: one-third goes to the Municipality of Anchorage (MOA) general fund; one-third goes to support operations and pay the bond debt for the Anchorage Convention Centers; and one-third goes to the MOA's destination marketing contract (currently held by Visit Anchorage). Do you support the current three-way allocation of Anchorage room tax revenues? Please explain your position.

It is critical to maintain the city, so it is a welcoming destination for those who visit Anchorage, whether for business, pleasure or both. As Mayor, I will review the Municipality's current operating arrangements, including the allocation and use of the room tax, with a careful eye for areas of opportunity. I will also meet with key stakeholders to listen and determine what the best path forward is for our city and our tourism industry, as we move forward into the 21st century.

4. In Anchorage, the visitor economy is already a significant contributor. Prior to COVID, the industry generated \$297 million in visitor-related spending and \$38 million in municipal hotel and rental car

taxes. In addition to the taxes paid by visitors, tourism created one in nine jobs locally. Do you support additional taxes levied on the tourism industry and/or customers? If yes, please explain the type of taxes you believe would be most appropriate, and also how you believe those funds would be spent. If no, please explain your position.

The tourism industry has been a contributing partner in Anchorage's economic success for decades. However, our friends and neighbors in the tourism industry, like those in the hospitality industry, have been devastated economically by Covid-19 and the accompanying mandates. We must come alongside our partners in these industries and help them get started down the road to recovery. Once we have our hands around this challenge, then we can come together with our partners and all stakeholders, including representatives from the tourism industry, to determine the best path forward.

5. COVID has fundamentally affected leisure and convention travel, and a complete recovery may be several years away. How would you work to aid local businesses and individuals – particularly those reliant on tourism and travel – so that they can survive and flourish?

I have been a business owner for over thirty years in Anchorage. I have been through the boom/bust of the pipeline days, and I know first-hand what it takes to grow a successful business and to bring a business back from hard times. As Mayor, I will ensure that CARES Act funding, including the first round of funding that was promised to the tourism industry last year, is distributed to those that need it. I will safely and thoughtfully reopen Anchorage, then communicate to visitors that Anchorage is open for business. I will work with our local businesses in their economic recovery, so our residents have the money to support the tourism industry as well. I will also partner with the airport and tourism operators to determine creative, impactful ways to increase destination Anchorage traffic and travelers.

6. Do you have priorities that would make the municipality a more travel-friendly destination? If yes, please provide details.

The focus of my mayoral campaign is to make Anchorage a safer, cleaner and more prosperous city. I consider it a promise to the residents of Anchorage, and it is critical to making the Municipality an appealing, travel-friendly destination. It has to start with economic recovery, and it must also include a reduction in crime, cleaning up our streets and working with local non-profits, along with private and faith-based organizations to help our homeless residents. In addition, I have a vision for Anchorage and our future, which includes a multi-faceted approach that includes growing our infrastructure, features different parts of our city, our local artists and more. All of this has to start with rebuilding our economy.

7. What do you see as the mayor's role in Anchorage's visitor industry, destination marketing, and community development?

I see the Municipality as a partner with Anchorage's visitor industry, destination marketing, community development, and with all sectors of our economy. I am the only mayoral candidate with proven experience as a business owner. I have spent the last thirty years partnering with clients throughout the Municipality: from Chugiak-Eagle River, all the way south to Girdwood and all points in between. I know how to work effectively with many stakeholders to find common ground and achieve success, even in toughest of times. As Mayor, I will carry this experience and perspective with me into City Hall and beyond our city. I will be our city's biggest cheerleader; I will work tirelessly to promote Anchorage as a destination for visitors and new business opportunities. And, I will also emphasize the importance of

delivering exceptional service to our customers – the local residents, businesses and taxpayers of the Municipality of Anchorage.

8. What are your overall priorities for the municipality?

If I earn the privilege to serve as Mayor, I will focus on making Anchorage a safer, cleaner and more prosperous city. We will focus on the following priorities: reduce crime; reduce the number of people experiencing homelessness; foster economic growth by creating a business-friendly environment that starts in the Mayor's office and is supported throughout every department in the Municipality; attract and promote new business opportunities and entrepreneurs; grow our local infrastructure; increase the educational output at the Anchorage School District; and, increase efficiencies and reduce burdensome regulations within the Municipality.

9. What do you see as the greatest threat to Anchorage's future success? What about the greatest opportunity for the community?

Our greatest threats to Anchorage's future success are a lack of vision and a lack of the right type of leadership. If we continue down the same path that we've been on for the past few years, focusing on the wrong things and hindering business growth, then we will stay stagnant and be ill-equipped to address our city's needs. Our greatest opportunity lies with an effective leader and with our future. I believe that Anchorage needs the right type of leader, one that can assemble a great team, one with business experience, one that has created jobs for Alaskans, and one that has grown businesses through innovation and hard work, all the while sticking to a budget. I have a vision for a 21st century Anchorage, where our city is vibrant and growing, and as the only business owner in the race for mayor, I believe I have both the experience and skills to help make this happen.

10. Would you be interested in a follow-up meeting with Visit Anchorage?

Thank you, again for the opportunity to share some of my experience, vision and goals for Anchorage with the members of Visit Anchorage and our partners in the tourism industry. I welcome the opportunity to meet with Visit Anchorage in the future, and look forward to hearing from you.