



## **MEMORANDUM**

**Date: November 29, 2023**

**To: Borough Assembly**

**From: Alexandra Pierce, Tourism Manager**

**Re: Background for Assembly Retreat**

At the November 6 COW, the Assembly expressed an interest in understanding CBJ's options around further limiting the number of cruise passengers visiting Juneau. This memo is intended to provide the Assembly with background data pertaining to implementing further limitations on cruise tourism with a goal of managing daily impacts on Juneau residents. At the retreat, I will provide additional context around the information presented herein, the City Attorney will provide further detail on our legal options. There are two legal opinions on cruise limits attached to this memo. I have also included links to Visitor Industry Task Force (VITF) report and other relevant documents to help frame the dialogue.

### **Daily Cruise Passenger Numbers**

When we discuss tourism impacts, we tend to focus on our high-volume days and how they impact residents. The below two charts show our busiest days by lower berth capacity and our median days by lower berth capacity. Note that we did not hit our capacity in 2022 because the ships were not sailing full. To inform the discussion around a reasonable number of passengers per day, I have provided this information to show how visitor numbers shift as the five-ship limit comes into effect and have also provided a chart showing the projected lower berth numbers for April and October. As part of the dialogue around our daily impacts and capacity, CBJ should articulate an official position on whether we consider the early and late ships to be problematic for the community.

<b>Busiest Days by Capacity – 2019-2025</b>							
	<b>Sun</b>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>
<b>2019</b>	12718	11398	17033	11538	10674	7420	6404
<b>2022</b>	12282	12854	20237	14502	12532	11072	9834
<b>2023</b>	12712	14242	19952	14502	12532	11572	10856
<b>2024</b>	9820	13680	17830	13442	13490	11122	9622
<b>2025</b>	12259	14292	17044	13824	12050	13214	8934

Median Days by Capacity – 2019-2025							
	Sun	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat
<b>2019</b>	9448	10132	14834	8008	8090	5153	4526
<b>2022</b>	9344	11697	15618	11420	8080	8948	6605
<b>2023</b>	9730	11160	15930	10790	9232	8490	8224
<b>2024</b>	8093	12125	14658	11214	10408	9315	6560
<b>2025</b>	8648	11210	15140	11163	10232	9740	6266

April and October Ships				
Year	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>First day</b>	Apr 25	Apr 17	Apr 9	Apr 9
<b>Last day</b>	Oct 18	Oct 25	Oct 24	Oct 21
<b>Total off season pax</b>	<b>50527</b>	<b>52230</b>	<b>115274</b>	<b>79277</b>

### Hot Berthing

There is some confusion in the public discourse about the five-ship limit and hot berthing. The limit does not prevent a private company from continuing that practice at a private facility that is also owned by the company that produces the ship schedule. Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska (CLAA) and Norwegian Cruise Line are continuing to hot berth per their long-term berthing agreement, and CLAA is simply not scheduling a ship at anchor on Tuesdays to adhere to the five-ship limit. Both parties are fully aware of the community's sentiment towards this practice. As the Assembly considers further limits, it is important to consider whether to explicitly restrict hot berthing.

### Negotiated Agreements

Negotiated agreements are flexible by nature and there are several options for further negotiated limits, including a daily passenger limit, a ship size limit, and/or certain "ship free days". In preliminary discussions about future negotiated agreements, the cruise lines and CLIAA are conceptually agreeable to the daily limit concept. There are several other ports in the world with negotiated agreements to limit cruise tourism. Some of these agreements set daily limits. For example, the Port of Palma, Spain sets a daily limit of 8,500 lower berth capacity and only allows one ship per day with over 5,000 lower berth capacity. The Mediterranean does not share Alaska's geographic and dock size constraints and hosts much larger ships. The Palma agreement provides two interesting options for limiting visitation – a daily limit and a ship size limit. It also sets berthing priority based on criteria that are important to the port, including using shore power when available. These are the types of negotiated options that CBJ could consider moving forward.

Our two existing MOAs are critical to implementing the strategy set forth by the VITF. Further negotiated agreements would refine that work while also establishing a basis for evaluating our infrastructure needs and for decision making around an additional private dock. I suggest that the

Assembly consider what types of negotiated solutions the body prefers while also understanding the scope of CBJ's legal options as presented by the City Attorney.

### Current Shore Excursion Opportunities

There has been much discussion around Juneau's shore excursion capacity and the need for more opportunities. The below table shows the upper capacities of the major available and planned activities in Juneau. Note that this is not comprehensive and several of the numbers are estimates. Also note that some people do multiple activities in a day or within the same excursion, for example, a whale watching tour with a stop at the Mendenhall Glacier Recreation Area (MGRA) Visitor's Center, or a city tour that visits CBJ parks and the MGRA. There are also numerous smaller capacity activities that are not reflected in this chart. However, as we consider visitor infrastructure in the context of limits and capacity, it's important to understand the major activities that are currently available and those coming online for 2026.

Shore Excursion	Regulator	Current Capacity	Future Capacity	Completion Date	Notes
Eaglecrest Gondola	Eaglecrest/Goldbelt	0	~500/day	2026	
MGRA Improvements	USFS	~530K/season ~3500/day	30% increase per phase ~4550/day – Phase 1	Phase 1 - 2026	Three phases planned, only phase 1 funded. MGRA-based activities (rafting, hiking) are included.
CBJ park and trail-based tours	CBJ	1401	1401	n/a	Capacity may change with CRUS, assumes USFS permitted tours included in MGRA total
Helicopter tours	USFS	570	685	n/a	Limited by USFS EIS
Whale Watch	N/A	2898/day in 2019	3000/day	n/a	Increase based on more boats for 2024
Mt. Roberts Tram	N/A	7000/day	7000/day	n/a	
<b>Total Daily Capacity</b>		<b>15369</b>	<b>16636</b>		

As the Assembly considers community goals for tourism impacts related to shore excursions, it is important to consider the regional context. The Port Communities of Alaska are furthering their efforts to organize, and it is important to remember that limits in Juneau affect the entire region and that evaluating our capacity and negotiating with the industry is an ongoing process to be continually refined as circumstances change.

**Attachments:**

Law Memo to VITF

Corso Memo on Cruise Ship Limits

**Helpful Links:**

[Visitor Industry Task Force Report](#)

[2023 MOA](#)

[2022 MOA](#)