

**Fair Sailing** is an initiative by the James Bay Neighbourhood Association (JBNA) to advocate for responsible cruise tourism practices that prioritize the interests of residents, local businesses and the environment of Victoria, Canada's highest volume port-of-call.

James Bay residents want quality of life, clean air, no foreign garbage and a healthy safe community. The impacts of the cruise industry in our neighbourhood include overtourism, air pollution, the import of foreign garbage and threats to public health.

This section of **Fair Sailing** outlines the impacts of overtourism, including overcrowding, noise and traffic congestion that reduce the quality of life for local residents, and outlines global and port community approaches for responsible tourism based on '**do no harm**' and the quality of life for local residents.

[www.fair-sailing.com](http://www.fair-sailing.com)

## Actions Needed

- Harbour Operations
  - Maximum
    - two ships in port at one time
    - three ships per day
    - 7,000 cruise ship passengers per day
  - Staggered arrivals and departures: only one ship arrival and departure per hour
  - All ships must arrive after 7:30 am and depart by 10 pm
  - No ships on Sunday and Monday
  - Use lowest-sulphur fuels possible to reduce pollutants when entering port and maneuvering
- Land Transportation Operations
  - No highway buses for cruise passenger transportation through James Bay
  - Tour buses to/from Ogden Point begin transition to electric in 2022; complete transition by start of cruise season 2025
  - 'handyDART' type buses for passengers who must use transit to downtown
  - No taxi permits from Ogden Point until a speed management system is in place

## James Bay and Tourism

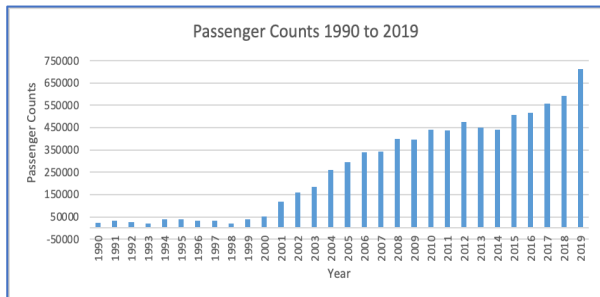
Tourism has been part of the James Bay neighbourhood and Victoria for over 100 years. Until recently, James Bay hosted more visitor overnight accommodation than downtown.

Stay-over tourism benefits our hotel industry, our downtown, and destinations beyond Victoria. Generally, this tourism '*does no harm*' to the quality of life in our neighbourhood; rather, it enhances. Residents enjoy interacting with stay-over tourists; giving directions, suggesting restaurants or speciality stores, or just getting to know each other.

The James Bay Neighbourhood Plan acknowledges the positive contribution of tourism to our community and the City, while recognizing the need to '*minimize disruption to residents*' and of '*limited*' tourism services at Fisherman's Wharf and Ogden Point.

Cruise tourism is in direct competition with traditional hospitality tourism. Low yield mass tourism does not support local mid or upscale restaurants or retail unlike hotel-based stay-over tourism when visitors stay from a few days to several weeks and contribute significantly to a range of local businesses.

Over the past 15 years, cruise tourism has altered the tourist-resident relationship in James Bay from positive interactions to negative impacts. Cruise 'Excursion' tourism brought **overtourism** to our neighbourhood from April to October when up to 700,000 passengers come into port, overwhelming our neighbourhood of 12,000 residents.



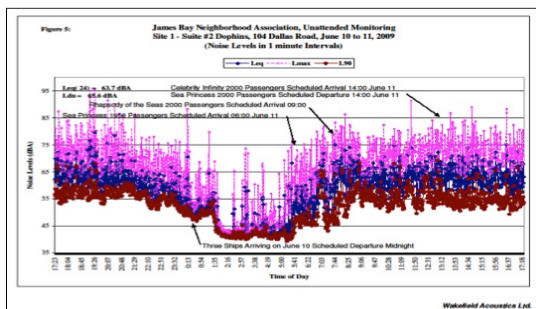
Studies suggest that 50-71% of passengers disembark. The disembarkation is also related to the ship and time of day. Part of the low disembarkation might be explained by the itineraries which most often schedule stops in Victoria on the last day of the voyage.

Data also suggested a disembarkation range of 6-18% difference between daytime and nighttime ships. Cruise passengers have commented that night-time visits limit exploration of Victoria.

In 2014, the President of CLIA acknowledged that Ogden Point is uniquely adjacent to a residential neighbourhood and cautioned against too many ships in port in one day.

## Noise

Studies from 2009 and 2011 showed that James Bay community noise levels effectively doubled with cruise ships in port. Noise includes ship generators and ship vibrations, sound systems, horns and traffic. The resultant noise impacts, do not respect "quiet hours", the need for residents to have predictable quality time for sleep.



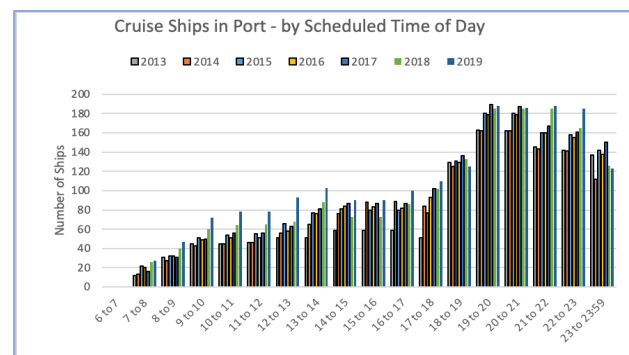
'Quiet hours' are recognized by responsive organizations such as the World Health Organization which first published Community Noise Guidelines in 1995.

Residential neighbourhoods outside downtown urban centres, have an expectation of "quiet hours". Cities with vibrant urban centres also recognize this need (see poster from Prague).



The City of Victoria does not have a "Community Noise" bylaw; however, Noise Abatement Bylaw No 03-012 recognizes quiet hours as being 10 pm to 7 am from Monday through Saturday and 10 pm to 10 am on Sundays and holidays.

15 years ago, ships typically visited on Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings. More recently, ships arrived on most days with a concentration of visits in the evening. Ships often do not leave until almost midnight and continue to sound horns for marine safety requirements for up to an hour after leaving.



Implementing daily 'quiet hours' without cruise ships before 7:30 am and after 10 pm, and reserving Sunday and Monday as 'quiet days'

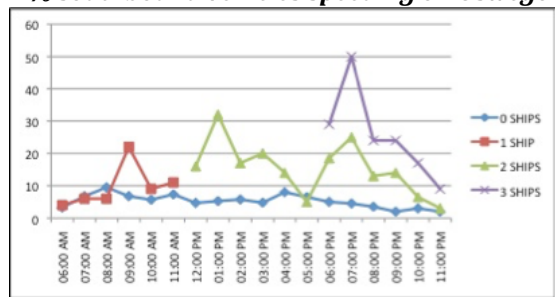
without cruise ships, would provide residents with a more acceptable 'quality of life'.

Further noise reduction would be achieved if ships used shore power, reducing generator noise and vibrations. This is discussed in *Fair Sailing's Air Pollution* section.

## Traffic

Traffic during cruise season has a significant impact on the quality of life for James Bay residents. Studies identified traffic surges and speeding attributable to cruise activity from Ogden Point to downtown when 2-3 ships arrived during the same hour.

*% southbound vehicles speeding on Oswego*



Issues of safety and congestion on the streets of James Bay have increased annually since 2006.

A 2017 GVHA commissioned Transport Impact Assessment study, by Bunt & Associates, was based on 2015 traffic and cruise visit data. It showed that James Bay streets, and several intersections, were at capacity. This was before significant passenger increases each year from 2016 through 2019.

Most cruise passengers travel by large highway buses or taxis to their destinations. All electric transit is needed by 2025. Transit must serve *all ages and abilities*. 'handyDART' vehicles may be needed for those with mobility limitations who require transit to downtown.

In 2019, a new waste management transfer station was established at Ogden Point. James Bay and other local communities are now exposed to significant additional traffic and increased noise and risk from large industrial trucks that carry various waste materials throughout the region and beyond.

## Responsible Cruise Tourism

Many ports have experienced overtourism. New and emerging sustainable tourism models that focus on full transparency and shared values are being created. James Bay and Victoria can learn from other jurisdictions that are addressing overtourism created by the unbridled growth of cruise tourism.

## Global Responses

Several European cities have closed off inner core areas to tour buses, and implemented or are considering "day-tripper" fees. Accommodation restrictions have been created to halt the tourist take-overs of their city centres as their urban cores lose livability for locals.

In 2017 Amsterdam prohibited more bike rental, ticket agency, fancy cheese, and Nutella shops. In 2019, Amsterdam levied a cruise passenger tax of €8 per passenger.

In 2017 Barcelona, created an accommodation law to limit number of beds on offer and imposed a moratorium on building new hotels.

In London, England, Morgan Stanley withdrew planning for the cruise terminal at Enderby Wharf. A ship docked at the port would have emitted the same amount of pollution as 600 transport trucks.

In Venice, problems include the loss of half the population caused by housing being used for tourism. In 2019, Venice began taxing day-trippers €5-10 in high season (akin to a local hotel tax). Cruise ships are now banned from the canals.

In New Zealand, the government outlined plans to “reset tourism” after Covid-19, focussing on a smaller number of “high-value” visitors, thus reducing the environmental and social burden of mass tourism. Programs to diversify the economies of tourism dependent towns are planned.

The Minister of Economic and Regional Development and Tourism, Stuart Nash, is leading the transition of tourism in New Zealand: “*The reality is that we have a responsibility to take an intergenerational view of the role of tourism in New Zealand.*” “*It can’t go back to how it was*”.

In late July, 2021, New Zealand’s *Milford Sound/Piopiotahi Opportunities MasterPlan* was launched. The plan calls for a ban of cruise ships, an international visitor access fee, the introduction of zero emission coach transport, and modernised infrastructure. The plan suggests a new tourism approach, replacing mass tourism. When launching the plan, Minister Stuart Nash stated “*Tourism at Milford Sound/Piopiotahi cannot return to its pre-Covid state. As a tourist experience, it was crowded, rushed, noisy and unsafe.*”

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## Port Community Responses

Significant changes to limit growth or constrain the industry occurred over the past several years to reduce impacts on port communities. As the cruise activity seeks social licence for resumption of operations in 2021, many communities around the world are demanding environmental accountability and local review. Limiting the number of cruise ships in port and staggering arrivals and departures are the most important and impactful approaches.

Several port cities in Europe and the United States are attempting to constrain cruise operations while the cruise industry is pushing back. Many communities are now involved in legal action. The outcomes of proposed limits for Bergen, Dubrovnik, Key West, Bar Harbor are not clear.

### **Bergen, Norway:**

In October **2017**, Port Bergen announced a policy to limit cruise calls per day to 4 ships (max 9,000 passengers) to avoid congestion and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

In **2020**, the city council decided there should be a limit of 3 ships and 8,000 passengers per day.

In July **2021**, Bergen City Council backed a proposal from the Socialist party which called for the inner harbour port to be regulated with one berth only for cruise ships with a maximum passenger number of 1,000 passengers.

### **Dubrovnik, Croatia:**

In **2018**, the City Council decided to create future limits of 2 ships or 5,000 passengers per day.

### **Key West, Florida:**

In late **2020** residents of Key West Florida voted to limit cruise ship visitors to 1,500 people a day, to limit the size of ship to those having a maximum capacity of 1,300 people, and to prioritize ships with the best health and environmental safety records.

The Florida Legislature banned voters from regulating ports.

City commissioners then said they want to find a way to implement the will of the voters.

### **Bar Harbor, Maine:**

In July, **2021**, residents recommended reducing the size of the ships in port, and the number of ships per day.

In past years, Bar Harbor had no official limits on the number of cruise ships but restricted the number of passengers to between 3,500 and 5,500 depending on the time of year.

### **Cruise Line International Association (CLIA):**

The cruise industry itself identified limiting the number of ships and staggering arrivals and departures as important steps towards sustainable healthy tourism.

Examples include the 2019 destination assessment of Dubrovnik by CLIA and the 2020 cruise industry’s *Healthy Sail Panel* recommendation.

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## Victoria and Future Cruise Tourism

On March 14, 2021 the Times Colonist published an article "*The new normal: Don't expect a return to pre-pandemic life, experts say*" which focussed on an interview with Thomas Homer-Dixon, Director of the Cascade Institute, Royal Roads University, a research centre that looks into the convergence of the world's environmental, economic, political, technological and health crises. Speaking of the cruise industry, Dr Homer-Dixon is quoted as saying "*I have long felt that Victoria has made an unwise bet and a massive economic commitment to this industry*".

Destination Greater Victoria's 2022-2026 Strategic Plan provides an overview of the impact of the pandemic and looks forward. It outlines an approach to re-establish tourism that includes positive visitor-resident interface. With a focus on social license and community values, there is opportunity for our neighbourhood to expect the value of "*do no harm*".

The Plan also focuses on the need for year-round tourism and includes results of a community survey. Residents recognize the value of tourism and the need or desire for year-round growth. However, they also identify that tourism can impact the costs of housing, may overload infrastructure, may divert resources/amenities from residents, and may contribute to damaging nature and the environment.

Now is an opportunity for Victoria to hit the reset button, supporting a sustainable tourism model focusing on transparency, sharing values, and building resilience and regeneration. A result that '*does no harm*' and respects the quality of life of local residents.

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## What Residents say

*"Build a City for Residents, and tourists will love it; Build a city for tourists, and it will be unlivable."*

*"I don't want the money so much as I want Victoria to remain a healthy haven for its citizens, but we need to be firm against the pressure placed everywhere by the cruise ship lines"*

*"2020 was a blissful year without cruise ships in James Bay: it was peaceful and quiet, the air was clear and clean, there was no congestion or speeding on our streets, and James Bay felt like a neighbourhood again rather than someone else's destination."*

*"Victoria is a city that will always attract tourists, just because of its charm, climate and uniqueness. I believe that we would do better to not cheapen ourselves by catering to mega cruise ship tourism and going for the fast cash, but rather to focus more on a long term better paced tourism that is exciting in its possibilities but more low-key in its approach."*

*"This opportunity to rethink before restarting should help us awaken to our responsibility not only to the immediate neighbourhood, but to the greater Victoria environment as a whole. There is no need for us to cower."*

*"It makes absolute sense to us that as residents breathing the air around us, we have a right to express our opinions about this matter and also that those opinions should take precedence over the economic interests of strangers."*

*"Could you possibly temper whatever response you eventually provide with real gratitude and humble unselfish acknowledgement of the values the cruises bring to our city."*

*"If we take a holistic view, recognizing the competing needs and concerns of all, I feel it may be very possible to constructively address these issues."*