



**Port of Port Townsend  
Public Workshop  
Wednesday, November 12, 2025, 9:30 AM**

**To be held in person at the Point Hudson Pavilion Building, 355 Hudson Street, Port Townsend  
and also online**

**Via <https://zoom.us/> – or call (253) 215-8782, use Webinar ID: 862 6904 3651, Password:  
911887**

**AGENDA**

- A. Union Wharf Use by American Cruise Lines
- B. Public Comment

*This workshop is open to Commissioners, Management, other Port staff, Consultants and the public. It is not the opportunity to give public testimony, but if Commissioners request input from individuals in the audience, those people may speak. The principal purpose of the workshop is to allow Port staff and the Board of Commissioners to communicate with each other and/or Consultants, answer Commission questions, and get the Commission's opinions and input regarding the subject topic(s).*

# PORT OF PORT TOWNSEND

## AGENDA MEMO

**DATE:** 11/12/2025  
**TO:** Commission  
**FROM:** Eron Berg, Executive Director  
**SUBJECT:** Union Wharf

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### ISSUES

The questions presented at the morning workshop meeting relate to the future use of Union Wharf, with the following specific issues on the afternoon agenda for action:

1. Should the Commission increase the docking fee for cruise ships from \$1,100 to \$2,000 per night?
2. Does the Commission wish to limit the number of dockings per year for small cruise ships?
3. Does the Commission desire a change to the draft capital budget (and legislative priorities) which includes the Union Wharf electrification and dolphin project?

### BACKGROUND

American Cruise Lines (ACL) has been calling on Port Townsend and docking at Union Wharf since 2013. At the June 11, 2025, workshop, representatives from ACL made a presentation to the Commission and requested to begin a discussion about a long-term agreement whereby ACL would invest in capital improvements to Union Wharf in exchange for preferential but non-exclusive use of the Wharf for a period of time (e.g., 20 years or more). Following that meeting, the Commission requested information from the downtown merchants about the impacts of ACL calling on Port Townsend. Specifically, the question presented by the Commission to Main Street was whether ACL's port calls were good for local businesses. Main Street conducted a survey and Natalie Maitland, PT Main Street Executive Director, will be at the workshop to present their findings to the Commission.

While that information was being gathered over the summer, a number of residents shared their concerns about a long-term agreement with ACL. Most of those making comments opposed any long-term agreement. In response, the Commission unanimously decided during its October 22 meeting that it would not entertain a long-term agreement with ACL, preferring to maintain as much local control as possible.

The draft rate cards, budget, capital budget and legislative priorities document all assume the continued use of Union Wharf by ACL at its current level. This table shows ACL's Union Wharf port calls from 2018 through 2025 (also includes tendering):

Year	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
<b>Total Count</b>	31	30	6	36	40	38	40	38
<b>Start</b>	12-Apr	16-Apr	22-Sep	12-May	14-Apr	13-Apr	13-Apr	12-Apr
<b>End</b>	24-Oct	23-Oct	6-Oct	18-Nov	3-Nov	24-Oct	27-Oct	26-Oct

ACL has requested 43 landings in 2026, starting on April 2, 2026, and concluding on November 1<sup>st</sup>.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Port obtained ownership of Union Wharf as part of a litigation settlement agreement with the City of Port Townsend in 2012. When the Port took ownership of Union Wharf, it negotiated a change in the grant restrictions governing the facility with the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO). The change acknowledged that Union Wharf was originally designed and constructed to allow the docking of larger vessels, and that short-term moorage of large commercial passenger vessels was expressly allowed. Under City ownership, the Wharf was really limited as a public access point and temporary tie up space for recreational boaters. ACL has been calling on Port Townsend at Union Wharf since 2013.

With the potential of a long-term agreement off the table, the remaining questions requiring resolution are as follows:

- What should the docking fee be to use Union Wharf?
- Should there be any limitations on the number of dockings per year?
- What projects, if any, should staff be working on to maintain and improve Union Wharf?

I have heard from a number of citizens who advocate that no small cruise ship dockings at Union Wharf should be permitted. If the Commission opts to go in this direction, Union Wharf revenue will drop to zero and I would encourage the Commission to engage in a robust discussion about the future of the Wharf as it ages and demands repair and maintenance. Without a business case, the Wharf will become a mill stone that is a drag on the Port's financial condition. With the vast majority of the Port's revenue derived from rates and fees, rather than taxpayers, it is critical that the Port's facilities be operated so as to help implement the Port's mission and generate revenue.

My recommendation is to maintain the current number of dockings with the increased rates to generate revenue for reinvestment in Union Wharf. To address concerns about cruise ship saturation, I recommend the commission that the number of dockings be capped to a maximum of 50 per year.

## **FISCAL IMPACT**

The draft budget includes rate increases of \$900/night (i.e., to \$2,000 per landing) which would generate approximately \$86,000 in revenue at Union Wharf in 2026 if ACL makes its planned 43 landings.

The draft capital budget includes a \$1.2M project at Union Wharf that is not funded in the 2026 budget as the Port has been seeking grant funding to make this project possible for the last few years.

## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. PT Main Street survey results
2. "Citizen Survey" submitted by Ashlyn Russell

## **REQUEST**

After hearing the staff report, PT Main Street's findings, and comments from citizens:

Please provide direction to staff in preparation for final action to be taken on the rates, budget, capital budget and legislative priorities at the regular business meeting at 1:00 P.M.



PORT TOWNSEND  
MAIN STREET PROGRAM  
SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES  
REGARDING AMERICAN CRUISE LINE'S PORT  
TOWNSEND VISITATION

November 2025

## ABOUT PORT TOWNSEND MAIN STREET



ORGANIZATION



PROMOTIONS



DESIGN



ECONOMIC  
VITALITY

PTMS Mission: To preserve, promote, and enhance the historic business districts

# TIMELINE FOR SURVEY ENGAGEMENT

Summer 2025 American Cruise Line (ACL) presents to Port Commission a pitch for an agreement to potentially expand port calls of their smaller vessels to Union Wharf in exchange for investment in dock.

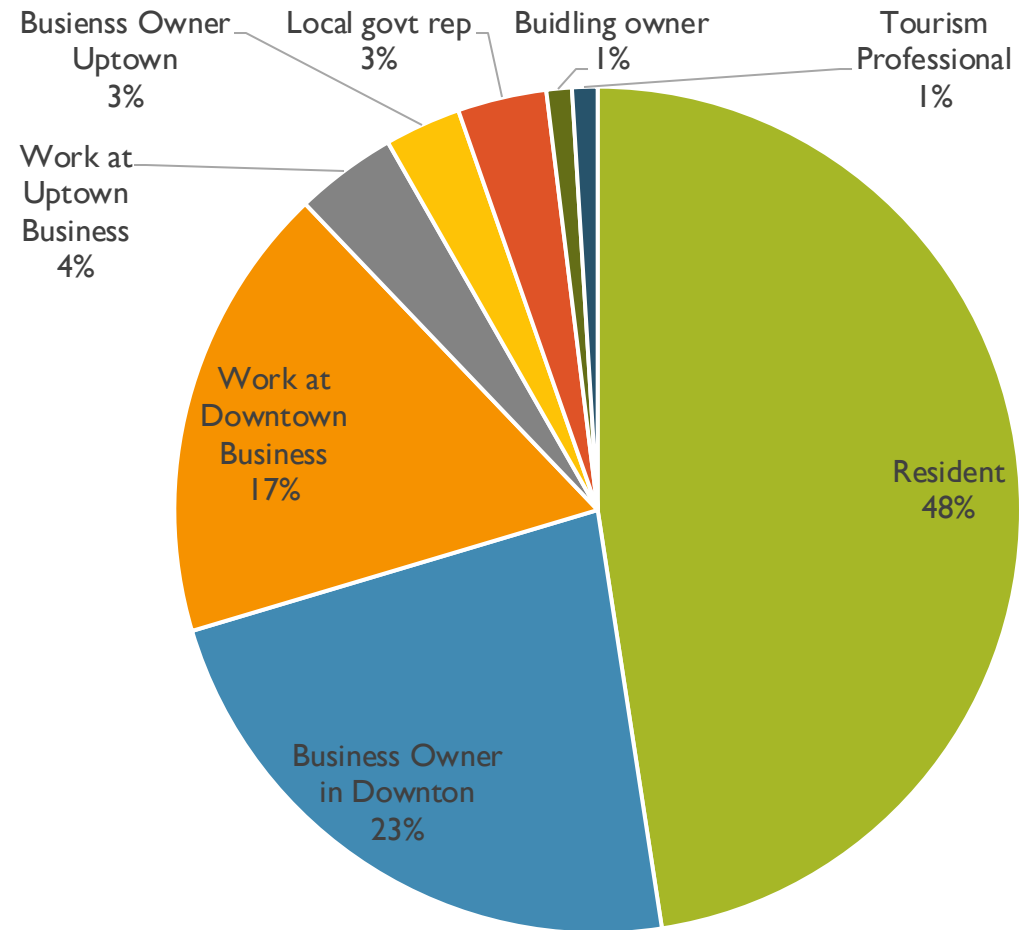
Community conversation begins on if the proposed idea is a good idea or not.

Main Street connects with Port Director and Representative from ACL on subject. Main Street commits to creating a survey to gain insight from businesses and residents on ACL current experience and potential impacts (positive and negative) related to proposed agreement.

The information provided for the basis of the survey centers on ACL bringing more small ships which would include the addition of a new, U.S.-built vessel coming to Port Townsend, which is even smaller than their current ships of 100-170 passengers.

Survey open October 1-31. Built on logic that populated additional questions depending on if you were a business owner/worker or a resident. Survey shared in person with businesses, through PTMS newsletters, and more broadly through sharing survey link on social media. Business Engagement Roundtable also help to discuss directly with business owners survey topics and shared solutions for best case economic benefit.

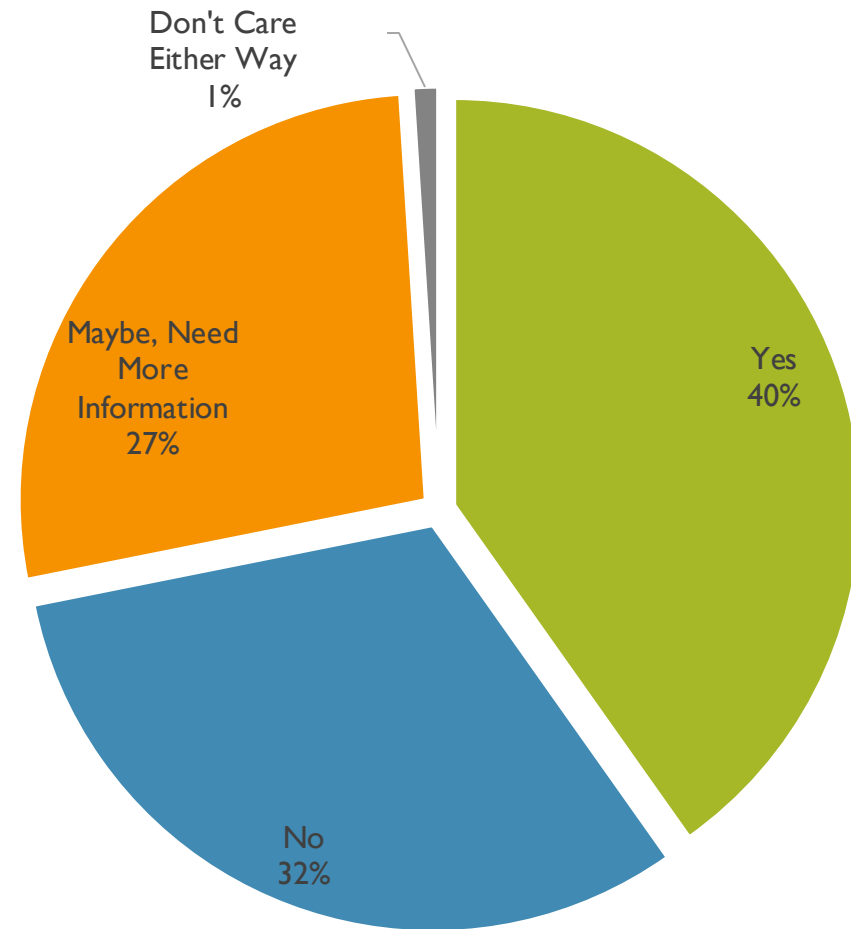
QUESTION: BREAKOUT OF  
RESPONDENT GROUPS



206 Surveys Completed; 97 Business Owners or Workers



QUESTION: THE PROPOSAL FROM  
ACL WOULD INCREASE THE NUMBER  
OF SMALL CRUISE SHIPS COMING TO  
PORT TOWNSEND. DO YOU SUPPORT  
THIS PROPOSAL?



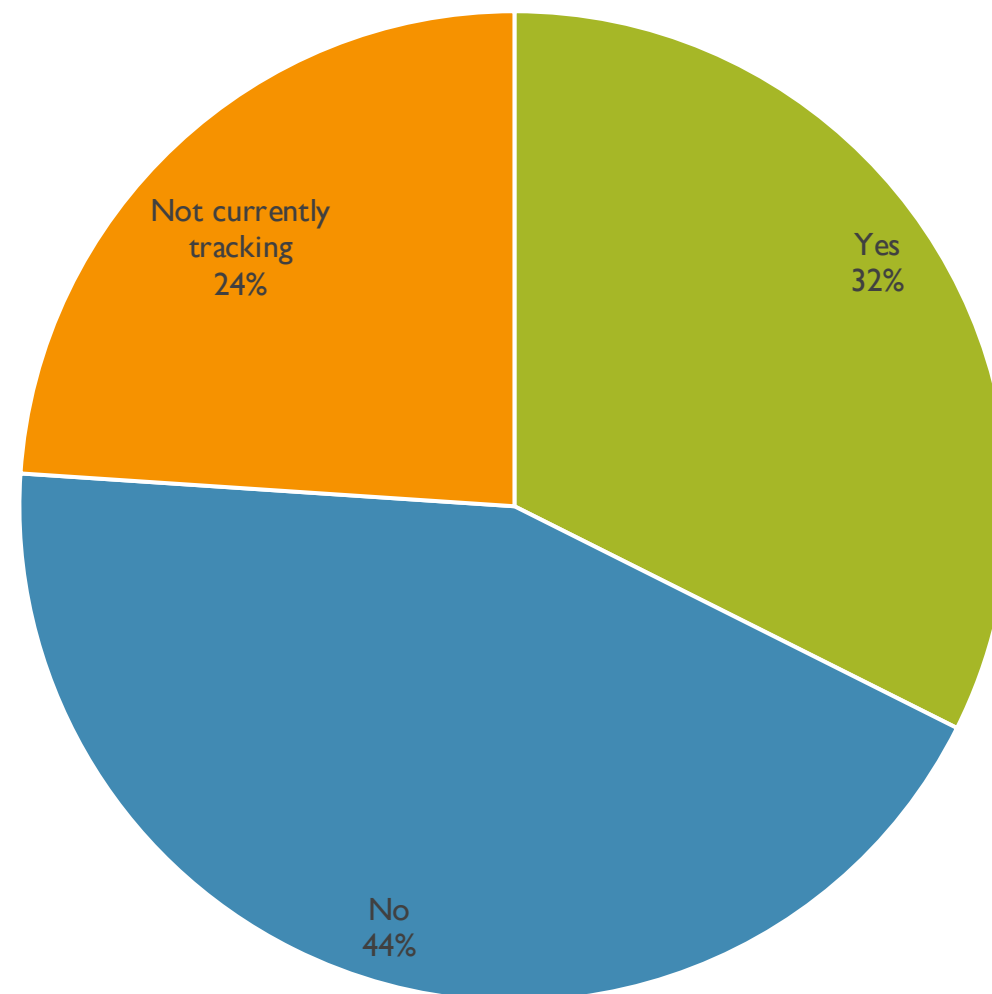
Yes respondents mostly identified as retail and other businesses.

Also, four restaurant respondents answered yes to this question.

No respondents were a mix of retail, other, and restaurants - with other and restaurants making up the majority of no respondents.

The respondents who indicated not currently tracking were an equal mix of the business type three categories.

## QUESTION: DID YOU SEE A SPIKE IN REVENUE ON DAYS WHEN CRUISE SHIPS ARE IN TOWN?



*\*Question available to businesses respondents only*

# QUESTION: WHY YOU MAY OR MAY NOT SUPPORT ACL'S PROPOSAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF PORT CALL TO PORT TOWNSEND?

You can find a summary of responses to this question based in four areas on the following slides.

## ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABLE VISITOR GROWTH

- Respondents who answered Yes to supporting a proposal view increased port calls as a boost for local businesses and a way to attract non-driving visitors.
- They note that cruise visitors help downtown merchants and that the current activity hasn't caused significant negative impact. In addition, overall supportive economic and tourism benefits.
- Ship visitors supports Port, City, and local jobs.
- Strengthens PT's identity as a tourist destination. Opportunity for ACL passengers to return on their own and generate lodging tax, sales tax benefits.
- Small ACL ships fit the character of the town.

## BALANCE AND CAPACITY – KEEP TOURISM SUSTAINABLE AND MANAGEABLE

- Respondents talked about balance in visitation and managed capacity
  - See existing visits as beneficial but 30% of respondents worry that additional port calls could overwhelm local infrastructure and small businesses, especially during the busy summer season.
- Protect natural assets and community quality of life
- Not just merchants, but other local businesses that provide experience offerings see economic benefit from ACL. These businesses provided guided, controlled experiences to manage tourism capacity.

## PROTECT NATURAL ASSETS AND COMMUNITY QUALITY OF LIFE

- Around 35% of comments expressed opposition to expanding port calls over concerns centered on environmental risks, visual impact of a boat sitting on the wharf, and overcrowding of businesses.
- Several responses convey the desire to protect Port Townsend's waterfront and local ecosystem.
- Negative examples from Alaska, large cruise ship concerns (*while this was shared in the survey it should be noted that ACL doesn't fall into the large cruise ship category*)
- Around 20% of mixed-support respondents shared they were open to more off-season port calls, but wary of summer crowding.

## TRANSPARENCY & MORE INFORMATION

- Some respondents requested more information before forming an opinion. They want clarity on how many additional ACL ships might come, when port calls would occur, and what mitigation plans are in place.
  - Respondents ask for trial periods, oversight, and guardrails.
- In a subsequent question on how Main Street can support, there were lots of ideas shared. Those include,
  - Being a voice to the Port on this issue, represented merchants in these conversations when merchants can't be present because they are at their shop.
  - Working with ACL to provide information on PT for the passengers; also schedules of when ACL is coming to PT.
  - Requests for additional data on spending, visitor behavior, and city revenue.
    - *\*PTMS incorporating business development and communications into their 2026 workplan to respond to respondent feedback.*

WHAT ARE OTHER CONSIDERATIONS  
YOU THINK ARE IMPORTANT TO  
DISCUSS OR CONSIDER AS THE PORT  
OF PORT TOWNSEND REVIEWS ACL'S  
PROPOSAL?

You can find a summary of responses to this question on the  
following two slides.



## ENVIRONMENTAL, SUSTAINABILITY, COMMUNITY CONCERNS

- Concerns about pollution, sewage discharge, diesel emissions, and trash overflow. Ask for trial periods, oversight, and guardrails.
- Common concern that PT lacks infrastructure to handle more passengers (restrooms, garbage, parking, dock capacity).
  - Requests for ACL to pay for infrastructure; clear obligations to support areas where infrastructure is lacking.
- Desire for better coordination between entities (Port, City, Businesses) (note: *this is an area where Main Street could be helpful*).
- Several mention the need for public consent and the ability to end the relationship if it proves harmful.
- Repeated calls for transparency between ACL, the Port, and residents.

# ECONOMICS OF TOURISM

- How can we think about where tourists go while visiting, how could they move around to other parts of town to avoid crowding downtown?
- More detailed economic data needed. (*note: an area Main Street can support*)
  - Supporters hope increased visits bring more revenue for local businesses, jobs, and tourism.
  - Skeptics question economic impact due to lodging and food being provided on the ship.
- Several want profits or fees to directly benefit the community, not just the Port.
- Suggestions to partner with local organizations (like JCHS) and offer coupons or local experiences to encourage spending – control local first mindset in experiences and off boat services.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

- Business owners/workers highlight there is revenue being generated from ACL passenger visits.
- Most residents do not oppose ACL's visits outright, but favor maintaining or carefully managing boat activity levels.
- The community appears divided but balanced between support and concern. Clear call for more information and open to continued conversation.
- Key Priorities include:
  - Ensuring tourism remains economically beneficial without overburdening local resources.
  - Clear information and transparency.
  - Protecting environmental quality.
  - Maintaining town character and livability.



## LOOKING AT NEXT STEPS

- **Communicate the economic benefits** clearly to better inform community conversation.
- **Look to a sustainable tourism approach** that aligns with Port Townsend's identity, economic vitality, and community goals.
- **Engage stakeholders** in transparent dialogue about visitor data, timing, and capacity limits. More information on what a long-term agreement between ACL and the Port of Port Townsend would really look like.

# THANKS FOR YOUR TIME TODAY



Port Townsend Main Street looks forward to continue to engage in this key topic for our historic business districts.

*Presentation prepared by Natalie Maitland / Executive Director, Port Townsend Main Street*

**From:** [Ashlyn Russell](#)  
**To:** [Eron Berg](#); [Pam Petranek](#); [Carol Hasse](#); [Pete Hanke](#)  
**Cc:** [Joanna Sanders](#)  
**Subject:** Citizen Survey results report re ACL in Port Townsend  
**Date:** Tuesday, November 4, 2025 7:47:09 AM  
**Attachments:** [Report of citizen survey results.pdf](#)

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Dear Eron & Commissioners Pam, Carol, & Pete,

Thank you for your patience.

I am attaching the resulting report from a citizen survey for your review before next week's meeting. Please include it in the meeting packet.

I put this survey together with the input and assistance of several friends. This was a tough project to achieve completely in the face to face way I had wanted due to time constraints but I think our 123 participants cover a decent cross section of our business and community members.

I was also one who suggested in late June, to Natalie at Mainstreet, that she do a survey. I am glad she did. Natalie relied a bit on Facebook with a write-in format on a professional survey platform. We used a sign-in google form and paper forms with several multiple choice questions in order to get the charts and we mostly avoided the brash social media storm. We made a concerted effort to stick to the facts about what ships we are talking about and why we were reaching out.

We included a question about being identified to the public and many preferred not to be publicly named in relation to their answers so I have that information but excluded it from the report.

Among our participants were shops that sell t-shirts, jewelry, knick-knacks, art, clothing, stationary, beads, yarn, wine, coffee, meals, herbals, books, the museum, and more; things you might expect a cruise ship tourist to do or buy.

I plan to be at the November 12th workshop and I thank you for your time and the job that you do.

I understand the frustration around this for some of you. It is a controversial topic everywhere and I learned a lot by simply asking others how they feel about it.

Sincerely,  
Ashlyn Brown 360-531-2901  
PT WATERCRAFT

## Preview of citizen survey results. 123 responses as of 10/31/25

*Includes breakdown of participants, sentiment on increase of ships, preferred number of ships, revenues estimates, comments and descriptives + Addendum.*

Regarding an *increase* of cruise ship activity in Port Townsend, our goal with our questions was to provide data points to assist the port with decision making and management of Union Wharf and Cruise ship visits.

Our cross section of participants included;

- 37% in-town tourism facing businesses
  - 49% Retail
  - 23% art gallery artists
  - 18% excursion or wellness offerings (salon, acupuncture etc)
  - 10% hospitality
- 25% community business owners with a history here, many with worldly experiences around cruise ships.
- 3 tribal members who live here
- 36% residents with various backgrounds

We tried to have conversations with as many downtown/uptown business people as we could and some of the employees were reluctant to fill out a form. Feedback ranged from hopeful and lukewarm to totally disillusioned and even angry.

If the number of this class of ships calling at Union Wharf increases from 30 to 71 by 2027, how does that make you feel?

123 responses



**Top responses:** 5 choices thrilled to alarmed + Other (write-in)

53.7 Alarmed\* + 11.3% “flummoxed, outraged, angered, extremely alarmed, = 65%

16.3% are “uncomfortable”

3.3% are “neutral / 7.3%= OK”

8.1% are “thrilled”

## What is your preference?

123 responses



Regarding the number of cruise ship visits people can agree with, “Shoulder season only” dominated by 41.4% as people may not like the ships but did not want to remove the *potential* to help town businesses at critical times of the year.

**Shoulder season only: 41.4%** (35% + 6.4% specifying 1/wk or 16/yr & no more than 30)

**No Cruise ships at all: 32.5%**

**2-4\* times/week all year: 16.2%** (13.8% + 2.4% specifying 2/wk max)

**“As many as we can get”: 4.9%** (4.1% + 0.8 specifying not yet considering limits)

**“Unsure”: 5%**

This is an important guide moving forward. Our survey never sought to get rid of cruise ships totally but rather to get evidence based information clarifying the true nature of these ships, positive or negative.

During our conversations, most agreed that limited calls to port by ACL are fair and chose the shoulder season with 16 to 30 visits similar to when ACL began coming here. At a perceived slow time for tourism, the activity in town inspires hope if the passengers are not whisked away in buses or the visits coincide with festivals and events.

Many people would rather see more interesting vessels dock with crews or passengers with incentives to eat ashore, take in a show, and buy something.

‘Cruise ship culture’ (dominance with 70+ /year) alarmed almost everyone.

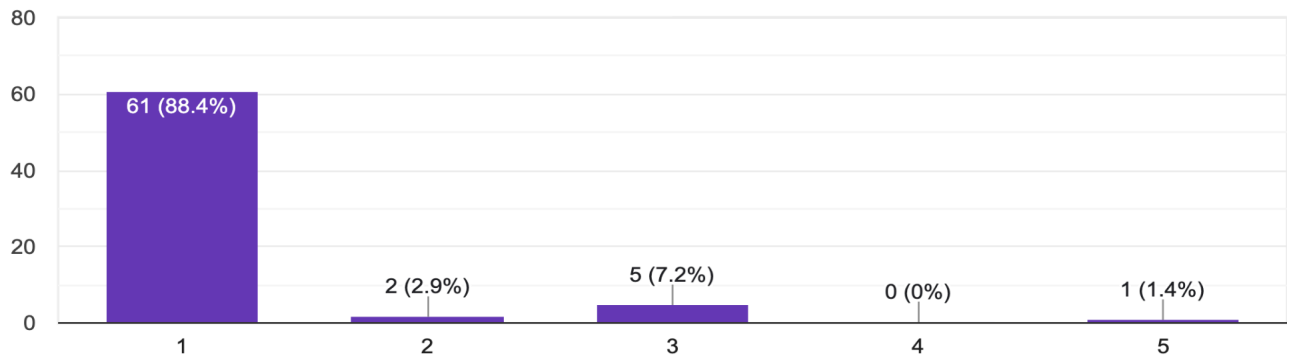
Many complained that town businesses cater too much to tourism now and as residents, avoid Water Street in particular. I interpret this as an opportunity to help businesses **attract more local customers** and for town to **attract more businesses serving locals**. A big obstacle for new businesses appears to be high rents.

Understandably, docking revenues generated for the port would be helpful with maintenance of Union Wharf, potentially leading to more diverse use of the facility.



Have the cruise ship passengers significantly increased your revenue? (roughly increments of \$0-\$300-\$600-\$900-\$1000+) \*\*Skip this question if...n in business since 2013+ when ships began here.

69 responses



Only businesses answered the revenues question. Results show all but 10 respondents making \$0 to \$300 in revenues. Many circled the word “Zero” on the paper surveys often used in town.

The break down: 69 responses

30 = confirmed **Downtown** businesses, galleries, and hospitality.

2 = confirmed Excursion/entertainment.

1 = **unidentified but claims revenues** (#3) from cruise ship tourists. (?)

14 = confirmed **Uptown** businesses incl. 3 non-veggie farmers market vendors.

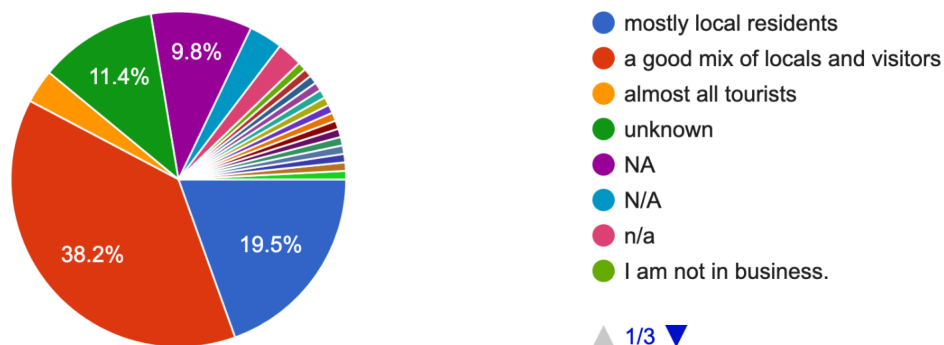
22 = confirmed **Local businesses-not downtown.**

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We also thought it was time to ask, as a starting point, who patronized our local businesses? The results are encouraging. Choices were mostly local to unknown + other. (write-ins hence the various forms of NA. **Red and Blue and Orange are what matter**)

Are your customers....

123 responses



We received a number of thoughtful comments on our “Bonus Question” shared below. Many took this question as an opportunity to make long commentaries. The most constructive are highlighted in blue.

**The majority agree in our strengths as a town ( in green) summarized here:**

Port Townsend has authenticity as a maritime, working waterfront and arts culture set in a historically significant, clean, and beautiful environment with great festivals and educational opportunities.

Bonus question: What do you see as the greatest strengths of Port Townsend that attract visitors who support the local economy?

Educational opportunities, events and festivals.

A real village complete with a retail downtown.

The historical town, the marine life and access to the water.

Port Townsend doesn't present as a place like everywhere else. The people who live and work here create an authentic mix of art, industry and culture.

Locals, friends, family period. Tourism is the worst form of dependence economy. Port Townsend needs living wage jobs. Tourism is a form of prostitution, ugly and unreliable.

The charming, quiet atmosphere..... with no cruise ships.

Someone said to me: "where do you all go to sleep at night?" as if this were a theme park.

The beauty and events and learning opportunities.

We moved to Port Townsend because we loved the small town community and wanted to be a part of it. My business serves as an essential supply resource for our town and the region, however I'm troubled by the way that local support for my business and Water street in general has suffered in direct proportion to the waves of tourist traffic flowing off the boats and roaming the streets. This kind of fly-by tourism is more interested in looking and being amused than really taking advantage of what our community has to offer, and it makes our local community feel unwelcome in their own waterfront.

Access to natural beauty and a creative culture

The quaintness, and the original idea of being a “Victorian seaport and arts community”

Food, Boats and the Arts

Curiosity.

We are off the beaten path and have a real “community” vibe, like you're in someone's living room when you come to visit here. We get unique travelers - not tourists- because of this. People have to seek this place out, and they love it when they do because we have a real authentic lived in town. Something hard to find and something many hearts are searching for. It weeds out the bad ones - we get great people who visit here. They keep coming back, they move here, they retire here bringing wealth... Cruise ship tourism is different - and it has a profound effect on a town that tends to commercialize it in a way that can take over downtown areas, and make them soulless economic engines serving a budget cruise economy - becoming more of an attraction for others than part of the community. It hits the heart differently. These towns become dependent on the ships, and locals stay away. Port Townsend can be more than that, I would hate for it to lose the attraction to the people who live here and move here and the visitors that we already receive to become a cruise town.

It's an authentic community we can show off so others can do it for themselves.

Open shipyard, boatyard, and docks where visitors can observe the skills that drive a fifth of the local economy.

A vibrancy that brings youngish people who then tell their friends, PT has always been a word of mouth spot.

I have more weaknesses than strengths to comment on.....

Local owners, cruise lines will start renting and take over.

Arts, geographic beauty, charming architecture, proximity to national parks,

There is a vibrant local community

The small town atmosphere and how we respect and keep it that way.

Interesting mix of business. Walkable, not over-crowded downtown. Appealing architecture - waterfront location.

Keep the numbers down...so those visiting aren't in crowds. Busy sidewalks, waiting in line, etc....who likes that? I don't travel to tourist areas except off season.

Unique and unspoiled YET!

Our strong marine trades community, arts and music.

The existent charm of Port Townsend, reflective of its creative and unique small business owners and staff, is this town's greatest appeal and strength. I hear it all the time!

While I do not own a business in downtown Port Townsend, I am, and have been, an employee at two businesses in town for years: PT Antique Mall, the PT Marine Science Center Gift Shop, and the Discovery Bay Golf Club. I can say, without a doubt, that the cruise ship guests simply do not make significant purchases that contribute to any significant economic enhancements for the businesses of which I've been associated.

I owned and operated my own restaurant in Oakland, CA, for 36 years and have a working knowledge of the effects of tourism per the economic health of a town/city. It's one thing when folks take up residence for a period of time while vacationing: Hotel rooms, dinners out, excursions out on the Sound, museum visits, etc. All benefit the local economy. Frequent cruise ship visits descending upon this area would appear like we have a bustling and thriving town with shoppers filling the coffers, but in actuality, that is simply not the case. It is too burdensome for travelers to pack anything in their luggage of any meaningful size. This is not just an observation of the buying trends of visitors, but direct quotes. The occasional t-shirt and refrigerator magnet are examples of the myriad small purchases typically made, and while pennies make dollars, a basic cost/benefit analysis, taking in account rent, employee wages and insurance, and utilities, does not reflect in the long-term.

Please consider, more remarkably, the delicate balance of our at-risk orca pods, gray whales, sea kelp, plankton, etc., faced with the potential for constant ship traffic on the Sound. Please make time to discuss the on-going efforts of a local organization like the PT Marine Science Center that work to keep these waters unpolluted and viable for the unique and varied sea life we have here. Everyone talks about saving our seas and the life forces within, but let's see some real effort and consideration for the very things that give us oxygen on our planet.

Thank you for your time.

Maria Lo Coco

A real working waterfront - not just a charming historical tourist town.

Historical town

Beautiful, no big box stores or chains

The charm and history of historic downtown. I'm a member of PT Gallery, a coop art gallery, on and off since 2005. I enjoy the mix of visitors from everywhere, and hearing of their interest in this special place.

Unique Artists, natural beauty, annual festivals, farm to table events and products.

Maritime History, Walkable town, Local farms

Vibrant working waterfront, crafts & services

The community that exists here year round. We do for each other. That spirit carries over to visitors. There should be no exclusive deals.

Every business sales person and restaurant worker I talk to says the ship passengers eat on the ship and look but don't buy.

quaint small town that is functional - has parking- has business

Beauty and environment

We are a vibrant small community of artisans of all sorts. Tourism on this scale displaces locals.

Maritime Center, Art Wave, Centrum Programs, Marine Trades @ Port of PT

Our cultural identity

Architecture, Art, sailing & salt water, history, involved local citizens

The colorful locals and businesses, do not let excessive tourism dilute and destroy our culture. Our culture is long in the building and, as proved by many other ruined cities, more fragile than money oriented.

the UNIQUE diversity and grand amount of music artists etc., via Centrum, wooden boat & Maritime related businesses and activities, culinary wealth...Port Townsend is a gem.

Beauty - History - People

Beautiful area with great food!

Geography & Events

The Marine Trades. They come in their boats to have them repaired, stay in the hotels, eat in the restaurants, buy goods and services from the trades.

The beauty of the area, Victorian architecture, water front pedestrian accessible, excellent restaurants, festivals and events.

The weather

The beauty of our community and the many fun, local events we hold annually.

Old Buildings

History and beauty

PT is unique, charming, and full of quirky, creative people.

Visitors don't contribute much unless you exploit land by selling or renting. They keep locals from shopping. The disease they can potentially spread is not worth the Pennie's.

Our greatest strength is that we are a real town with real working people. This is in contrast to places like Coupeville and La Conner

They sleep, eat and drink on the ship, why bother with them. maybe they will buy a postcard? I went to the jewelry store downtown and he said he sold one \$800 necklace to a cruise person, otherwise, just looky-loos taking up room. It will destroy the town for the locals.

Festivals and special events

Our Marine trades, industry and history of a working middle class town! If locals are happy others will come without having to support outside corporations.

Mix of unique shops and dining establishments

Stop tokenizing businesses and actually support businesses that are good. There are so many mediocre spots with a lot of face time.

Art, music, maritime trades and sailing

The charming downtown and friendly people.

Small town, open spaces, picturesque scenery, friendly locals

Fort Worden State Park

Proximity to National Park. It's a pass- through. Artsy town.

many junk stores and expensive food

Friendly people and beautiful old buildings! We need way more restrooms downtown.

Natural beauty. Let's preserve it.

Not cruise ships. They have ruined many small towns.

Charm

Small town, small businesses, not cookie cutter

art, culture, friendliness, community, local & sustainable lifestyle

art, music, wooden boat building, sail training

Our beautiful trees and our small town.

Victorian, Arts, Festivals, old timey

I am not sure anymore...

The wild weirdness and lack of structure that permits people to express themselves in uncensored ways.

Historic, Friendly, Vibrant, Beautiful

Preserved buildings, beautiful scenery, variety of unique shops/restaurants, rich history

The eclectic vibe. The beautiful scenery that would be horribly marred by cruise ships in the straights and at the union wharf.

Wooden Boat Festival

Scenic setting, unique arts and culture. This is why we need more affordable housing so that working artists can stay in town and help keep things interesting. Definitely support more visitors arriving by boat rather than car (driving & parking).

Historic port with Victorian houses in stunning natural settings. Good restaurants.

Our maker culture from Farmers Market to boats (including Boat Haven/marine trades and Maritime Center) to galleries to restaurants to various cultural festivals. The history and flavor of a small town seaport.

Great unique shops with amazing employees

Beauty of town - cruise ships make it more difficult for local citizens to use services downtown (ie restaurants and stores)

Visitors are great as is tourism, but the ships don't bring money into the town.

Cruise ship passengers offer almost nothing to the local Economy

Shopping and food

Not-overly busy (yet) charismatic small historic town.

Marine Trades

Shopping, Farmers Market, Port Access, Fort Worden Beach/Bunkers/camping, access to the west end of Olympic national park, whale watching ferry access.

Port Townsend's local charm, Fort Worden, beach, marinas, boatyard. Need to attract more young families with affordable housing, jobs, basic tourist service industry. Increase tech training for young people (ex. Underwater robotics, water related jobs and research.

tourism shouldn't be our main industry - affordable housing (works for me)

Old world charm, slower pace than big city. Working waterfront, no big corporation businesses.

Marine trades will be hurt - uniqueness of PT will disappear.

Charming, Creatives and Small Town Vibes

Variety of small businesses

Small shops

The people

The "small Victorian seaport" feel is on - but it gets simultaneously overrun, especially as entitlement attitudes show up more and more. I wish I knew the magic to balance inputs of "reasonable" tourism.

Known as a Victorian community with great shops and a lot of fun summer events. A community of the arts.

History/Boats/Arts

The architecture and character of downtown and the farmers market and peace of uptown.

Sailing, Woodwork, crafts, healthy green space, nature, Maritime Center, SCUBA diving, cycling, live music

Most visitors come all this way to PT by boat, car, rv, which are slow forms of transportation. They come to experience the whole environment and Olympic Peninsula area. They stay longer utilizing all services available in whole communities.

Being an authentic working town. This (ACL) is an oligarch business that is taking money away from this community, a resource extractor. We can support ourselves without relying on tourism.

Victorian Buildings and History, Off beat character and events, vibrant downtown, beautiful environment, friendly people

The arts and entertainment; maritime center & academy; boat haven; centrum; education; farming; wooden boat school; Port Townsend waterfront AS IT IS; historical character

The beauty and antiquity of our charming community. A balance with just enough - not too much with the cruise ships is important. Too much of anything is never good. Moderation is everything, is what I was taught. Thank you for this opportunity to comment.

*The responses below speak from experiential knowledge to common assumptions and some see the larger ships in their comments as big red flags. I included them so you have the full picture and I grouped them for a little easier viewing.*

**Responses to: First descriptives that come to mind about the cruise ships currently visiting PT:**

#### **Cautionary economic and cultural:**

Gateway to a single industry town / They eventually push a town to cater to their clients / Overtourism / congestion / I've seen the increased number of ships overtake small AK towns./ zoo, uninvolved, spectator, time consuming / fish in the pan- no real investment in the place or community / Long-term impacts. /

It has changed the look and feel of the working waterfront from industry to tourism / I think the town doesn't need them. / What's happened to our little town? / Be Very Careful / Disneyland - watch the natives / No more please / Crowds, superficial, visitors who do not add value to our small town culture / Conflicting interests /

#### **Moderate & Mixed feelings**

I think of a limited demographic. I'd rather have a ferry direct Seattle to Port Townsend so a more diverse population could come visit and also less cars driving around or to Bainbridge.

/ Meh / I enjoy seeing them bringing people into town. / I don't understand them./ No more than what we have. / retiree influx / Some business of its marketed properly / Old People / Tourists walking on Water Street / Old Folks /

Meh - but now we have problems with inadequate restrooms and trash issues /

### **Strongly Against,**

[Sickening and unnecessary waste of our community resources](#) / [Visual blight on our downtown shoreline.](#) /

Unrealistic / ruinous / Not good / Not in Port Townsend! / Nuisance / Oh, no / YUK! / Illness (FLU And Covid) / Help! No! / typical PT. (favor locals not tourists) / Entitled / Sidewalk congestion / NO NO NO!!!! / Ugh! I have come to dislike Thursday's, aka "cruise ship day". Ship customers like to look but only a few shop. / Cluster f..Downward spiral...horrificed /

NO! / No thank you. / too stupid / YUCK / what the f" / too much / Worst idea since KUR ORT / Disease spread / Barf / Bad / Huh? Why? / oblivious / Oh no! / Intrusive / No! / Ruin / Noooooooooo / nightmare

### **Environmental concerns:**

[Gluttonous infrastructure suck on an already fragile system](#) / Pollution and money / Over crowded. Environmental strain / Pollution / Not enough public restrooms and antique sewer pipes under the streets! / Pollution / Environmental disaster / Look at Alaska. That's a BIG NO!!!! / Environmental disaster / Trash, overcrowded sidewalks, environmental concerns / Alaska cruises / Toxic pollution for the climate / climate impact / Solid hazmat waste / Environmental hazard / Environmental nightmare /

### **Little economic value**

[The financial benefit is much less than the negative impact on our community.](#) / Little to no value for PT / Greed- not thinking of future for PT / commercial wasteland / Wealthy tourists, harder for locals to use downtown businesses / Too many people in a small town / Benefits some downtown merchants, not residents / Cruise ships have already ruined the Alaska port cities - no locals make money. / Too many visitors that don't spend much money / Crowds of lookers not buying anything /

**On the assumption that more people = money and there would be fewer cars with ship passengers:** *(Most of these came from non-business residents.. There are definitely shops that like the traffic but the same admitted rare sales from cruise ship passengers.)*

[Not excited to see them but want a vibrant downtown so have decided it's better to have them.](#) / Good thing / Older visitors not driving cars into town to spend \$\$\$ / Income for local businesses / How wonderful / Tourism/business / Money / Increase in retail sales / business / Beneficial / Great! No additional cars to crowd streets while bringing customers to our local businesses./ Great way to support the artists in our community. / Great! / lots of people coming into the gallery / Tourism Shoppers / Souvenir spending, cultural interest, car-free /Dollars / Improve sales for local businesses. / People will spend money and they will not need parking. /

### **Tourism without indication of for or against**

tourists /tourism / Crowds / Crowds /

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This has been a combined effort by Ashlyn Brown, Joni Blanchard, Musa Jaman, Inger Rankins

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The addendum below is intended to be a constructive perspective.

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## ADDENDUM A

In addition to general tourism, Port Townsend has greater strengths that deserve credit and attention. Unlike many small and depressed towns, Port Townsend has:

- Industry and entrepreneurs who generate living wage jobs benefiting residents county wide
- Educational and vocational centers training new generations for a broader/needed workforce.
  - These same centers welcome invested visitors, engaged in the community and distributing their dollars around more than day tourists can.
- Events and festivals that attract both short and longer term visitors who find affinity here in vibe and experience.
  - Port Townsend continues to strive to serve and attract locals to downtown & uptown with diverse shops and restaurants. *(Building owners, City, Mainstreet and the EDC could play a stronger, more supportive role on this point, than it has.)*
  - Port Townsend has a strong tradition of community culture above commercial profit that is the envy of many.

### **What are the collateral damages created by allowing cruise ships long term security in a town?**

Ask yourself what the cruise ship corporation's mandate is.

= Maximum profit.

Historically, how have they done this?

- Set up guarantees for privileged treatment and specific operational rights.
- Supply prepaid onboard gourmet meals and cocktails which guests would not wish to miss.
- Import their own large transportation vehicles to ferry guests to otherwise walkable areas,
  - bypassing stores, and establishing a “look through the glass” norm
    - Additional congestion and pollution
    - Negates potential economic benefits for local stores
- Share the cost of building local infrastructure that serves their purposes but not the local community. These projects are often ongoing to meet their increased demand but are not designed for local use or to answer local needs.
- Purchase local real estate (esp. vacant stores and buildings) and open stores serving their customers and exporting profits.
- For locals to benefit at all, the onus is on locals to establish excursion businesses (preferred by the corporation) to serve ship's guests instead of goods and services for the local community,
  - thereby creating a lopsided dependence on the cruise ships coming more frequently, thereby shifting the town's focus economically and culturally to be reliant on this type of tourism that excludes all but a few.
  - The jobs potentially created are not living wage jobs, and that in an area with an affordable housing crisis. Cruise ships often use their own low wage crews.
  - Excursions most often mean wheels on the road. Exceptions? whale watching/day sails.
- Locals eventually avoid town even more on cruise ship days and order online the things they need, adding to the army of Amazon trucks circulating on every other street.

To label cruise ship tourism as ‘economic development’ denies the experiences of towns all over the world and fails to understand the local and sustainable nature of true economic development our leaders may wish to be remembered as supporting.

Port Townsend residents have made this place creatively vibrant in ways that most small towns cannot claim. **When we strengthen a town for locals, visitors absolutely love it.** It is a good recipe and we should not burn this cake.

*Authored by Ashlyn Brown based on decades of experience in tourism in the Caribbean & Mediterranean, witnessing additional cruise ship behaviors in SE Alaska, BC., VA, & Maine, plus online research 360-531-2901*



## Joanna Sanders

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**From:** Joni Blanchard <jonijobone@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 23, 2025 3:20 PM  
**To:** Eron Berg; Pete Hanke; Carol Hasse; Pam Petranek; Pam Petranek; Clayborn Burleson; Joanna Sanders  
**Subject:** Crusie Ship Issue~

Hi Everyone, (Yes, Joanna. This is public comment)

I just listened to the 10/22 meeting.

I would like to let you Commissioners know, that a 'Citizen's Survey' has been underway (created by a small handful of us 'concerned citizens - hence the name) for the past month ½ or so. We have over 100 responses - more than ½ from our local businesses. We intend on creating Pie charts from it and submitting it to all of you around the 3<sup>rd</sup> of November for you as you deliberate the 'high water mark' of how often these ships should be allowed to come tie up at the Wharf.

Now that 'no legally binding agreement' has been unanimously agreed upon, that 'high water mark' is now the primary focus for you to decide. (Along with a wharf maintenance plan for the future - which, as Eron once said - you would be able to figure out how to do yourselves without the help of ACL).

Our Citizen's survey was intended to obtain data and opinions for the majority of our uptown/downtown business who are NOT Main Street Program members - since the Main St.'s survey is targeting mainly their member businesses only. Our results are showing twice as many business responses than Main St. program has members! I don't think you're all aware that most of our downtown/uptown businesses aren't members. I'm hoping you give our survey as much consideration as you do their survey.

Pete, this conversation became sparked to life by the threat of our Port being propositioned to become legally bound to ACL for decades ahead so that they could have primary scheduling rights to our Wharf and increase their visits well upon what they're already being allowed to schedule.

It is true they've been coming since 2013. Up until 2024, they have been coming 16 times a year on shoulder seasons only. Last year in 2024 they came 30. This year 41. In 2027 they're scheduled for 72.

It is the noticable INCREASE of their visits (and the threat of even more) that our survey is showing is making the majority of our businesses 'alarmed', 'extremely alarmed', 'uncomfortable' and put out. As you will see by the data charts, most prefer shoulder seasons only - once a week or none at all. It is an extremely small percentage of the businesses that make any kind of a 'significant' benefit from their visits. I find it hard to believe that you don't understand how legally binding our town to these frequent cruise ship visits for decades ahead would alarm the community. You seem to be looking at the Port's bottom line ONLY and not thinking in a 'triple bottom line' mentality.

All of us actively opposing this issue are aware that ACL won't be creating an Alaska 1,000 passenger ship scene.

And we understand we cannot stop cruise ships from tendering their passengers from open water anchorage - as we learned with the World when it came and will come again in 2026. But we CAN limit the smaller ships from using our Port's Wharf in an attempt to keep our local community businesses enjoying having their businesses here - instead of dreading another cruise ship's passenger swarm. And, hopefully, not gain the attention by the even larger ships as 'the favorite port to visit'.

With each cruise ship visit comes their full-size diesel bus that winds its way through our neighborhood roads to show off our quaint and charming homes to the passengers. As I've mentioned before, we don't need more affluent retired outsiders falling in love with our town and wanting to buy up what's left of our houses and properties. That is NOT the demographic we need to be attracting to our town.

If the Port is to allow these cruise ships to continue increasing their visits overnight on our Wharf (up to 72 in 2027 and then more), they will need to add a storm-proof fire suppression system to their comprehensive budget - to be up to code. It will also put more pressure on the Port to mitigate the pollution factor by installing cold ironing. Allowing more visits also creates the need for more public restrooms (so they quit bothering our restaurants about that) and also more garbage cans and pickup. It's time for the Port to put a lid on these visits. Past time.

Please, I know with an increase of revenue for each ship visit, it is tempting to allow them more visits - but, please - listen to the desires of your constituents.

Joni

## Joanna Sanders

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**From:** Joni Blanchard <jonijobone@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 4, 2025 11:18 AM  
**To:** Pam Petranek; Pam Petranek; Pete Hanke; Carol Hasse; Eron Berg; Joanna Sanders  
**Subject:** ACL Website changes~

Hi Everyone,

I just want to correct my last email I sent to you.

The American Cruise line website has been updated recently with changes to their Puget Sound Schedule. They've now included their 2028 schedule, also.

Instead of 72 visits scheduled for 2027, as was listed in June, it now has 50 visits scheduled. Their 2028 schedule has 70 visits scheduled. (Maybe because their new ship, the American Pioneer, won't be ready to incorporate now until 2028).

I was also wrong about the # of visits in the past 5 years. Apparently, since Covid, that was when the visits went up with visits increasing to an average of 35 - 40 visits each year.

(Sorry, I mistakenly counted on AI and ACI's website for my past few years' numbers!). Those numbers showed less visits than actually occurred.) With the popularity of cruises rising, the numbers of actual visits will most likely end up being more than are originally scheduled.

Joni (This is public comment)

**From:** [Lorilee Houston](#)  
**To:** [Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** cruise ships  
**Date:** Thursday, October 30, 2025 11:19:43 AM

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Dear Ms. Hasse, Ms. Petranek and Mr. Hasse,

I am writing to you in regards to your preemptive decision to not allow a contract to American Cruise Lines to dock at City Dock in 2026.

I have lived in Port Townsend for 20 years; worked at the Bishop for 11 years and have volunteered for Mainstreet, 10 years and Steampunk for 14 years. I do not have a retail shop or restaurant in downtown. I am often in and out of retail shops and restaurants handing out posters and materials and talk with owners and staff about goings and business in general. Yes, I have heard but they don't buy anything or just smalls but I don't think they want the cruise ships to stop coming. They do buy, eat and drink in our restaurants and generally enjoy what PT has to offer. Imagine, they might even come back for a vacation. One of the best things about cruise ship visitors is that they don't have cars to add to our parking problem. I feel that you have based your decision on hearsay. Many people don't want tourists in their town. Many people don't like the mill. Should we get rid of either one?

I know that these small cruise ships carry 40-90 passengers and will make 40 stops during the Summer and then on to PA, who welcomes them. We already have an infrastructure to entertain these cruise visitors with history tours, Fort Worden Tours, Winery tours, harbor tours and casino tours. Please include these vendors in your process.

I know how many visitors and stops the cruise ships may make and I know that some of your employees also know this. I don't know why you three don't. The Port and Mainstreet and the leader need to educate the public on the benefits of these cruise ships. The Port needs the money, Port Townsend needs the money, and because of less federal funding our waters and wildlife need the money. If nothing else, it is marketing. Where is Shelly Leavens in all of this? I went to the Seattle Bridal show many years ago as a wedding vendor, very few people knew where Port Townsend was, note the word port in our name, or had ever been there. I do not want to go to the years old complaint, that you can't buy underwear in downtown. We are unfortunately headed there again due to the parking issue.

I am thrilled that the Port is doing so well, even though I can't park there anymore to enjoy my latte. I do not complain about that, I celebrate it.

We need these cruises. What is this dock for? The Port should consider a tour thru the Port. Tourists would enjoy the ships in Port and what goes on in repairing all types of boats as I do. I would volunteer to help with this.portoft.com

Please reconsider and I humbly ask you to do your home work.

Lorilee Houston, homeowner, resident and volunteer

**From:** [Melissa Moller](#)  
**To:** [Public Comments](#)  
**Subject:** ACL visiting PT  
**Date:** Sunday, November 2, 2025 10:59:14 AM

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To The Executive Director Eron Berg, Commissioners and Concerned Citizens,

I read the article in the Leader. It lacked several important things, facts. We can not base decisions on uninformed public opinion. I also attended the first discussion offered by Main Street. It was much more informational than the article.

The community needs facts about ACL including their history, history in other Washington ports and here in Port Townsend. Most haven't even been aware of their presence in the last few years. People need to know specifically where they go in the Puget Sound? What do the other communities ACL visits say about them? For instance Port Angeles. Ten years ago the waterfront was a ghost town. The city and port worked with the cruise ships and now the wharf is a vibrant addition to Port Angeles. How does Friday Harbor and Poulsbo feel? How do cruise ships impact them?

The community needs to know about planned excursions. How important our history becomes to the visitors via the History Museum. How cruisers support our History Museum.

The community needs facts about regulations surrounding ACL in U.S. waters, as well as what is required of the cruise ship when coming to ports. This should include regulations by Coast Guard, International Maritime Organization (IMO), State and Federal Laws.

They also need to know more about the expense of keeping our docks and piers. Maybe even some of the historical facts about working to build on the shorelines. They also need to know ACL has offered to help with the 1.2m renovations for "non-exclusive access" and what that means to all of our waterfront. We need to know what the contract says. What are the benefits and deterrents? We need to understand the long range benefits for all the community, not just move on because of those who oppose it in the here and now. This becomes the art of negotiations with ACL. The contract, as all contracts go, is not final until it is signed. If you haven't seen it, get a draft of it. Know what is in it. Then you can negotiate!!! Don't just walk away from the possibilities for our future.

As for downtown businesses, of course the cruisers go in the stores. They go to restaurants. I have met many on the streets, in the retail shops and galleries that love their visit to Port Townsend because it is so unique and friendly. You can not brush ACL aside based on the few opinions that it does not benefit them. Do they engage customers, ask where they are from??

If this alone instills fear of being overrun by outsiders and we stop cruises altogether, then our wonderful city becomes nothing but professional businesses and the downtown vibrancy dies. I have done lots of research on the vitality of small cities and towns, the end result ..... This is how we die. Thanks to contempt prior to investigation. It takes effort to see beyond.

Ok enough of the finger wagging! Personally, I love coming down into town and seeing the ship here. It makes me feel special and that I live in a special place. WE are a destination. It

takes effort to come here. They are not driving and taking up the precious parking. We have an opportunity to continue providing Port Townsend with support for its vitality.

"The questions on the table":

What are the benefits of the cruise ship in other ports?

How do we pay for projects on union wharf?

What are the projects that need to be done?

What is the cost of these projects?

Where will the money come from? NOTE: I am told, the port has not been able to secure grants to pay for projects.

What should the docking fees be?

How many dockings a year on average? 2 per week? Time of year?

With 100 to 170 more people on the streets during docking, how does that impact retail, History museum and parking?

What are the trade offs in the contract?

Is it only a "20 yr non-exclusive preferential docking deal"? Maybe a 5 or 10 year deal?

What is the power shift that is suggested?

By having a contract, does this keep other cruise lines (possibly bigger ones) from taking up the wharf?

--

*Melissa Moller*

Western Washington

[melmoller@gmail.com](mailto:melmoller@gmail.com)