



**COMMISSION
AGENDA MEMORANDUM**

Item No. 11b

BRIEFING ITEM

Date of Meeting June 22, 2021

DATE: June 1, 2021

TO: Stephen P. Metruck, Executive Director

FROM: Stephanie Jones Stebbins, Managing Director Maritime
Mike McLaughlin, Director Cruise Operations & Maritime Marketing
Marie Ellingson, Cruise Operations & Business Development Manager

SUBJECT: Cruise Update 2021 Seattle Season

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Briefing to Commission on projected 2021 Cruise Season. We will be covering four main areas:

- Status of 2021 Cruise Season
- Public Health Precautions and Coordination with State Department of Public Health and Public Health-Seattle & King County
- Safety enhancements at our Terminals
- Engagement with Community and Stakeholders

Status of 2021 Cruise Season

Cruise ships will be returning to our harbor after more than 20 months. Our first revenue Cruise is expected on July 19 and we expect our last call on October 23. We have 7 Cruise lines and 8 different Vessels intending to homeport out of the Port of Seattle. For context, in 2019, we had 12 homeported vessels. Also note, that these vessels will be sailing at less than full capacity. The Most of these vessels will be sailing with at least 95 % of both passengers and crew vaccinated. At this time, we are still working with one line that would require all eligible for vaccinations to be vaccinated, but would like to allow unvaccinated children to Cruise, allowing families to travel together.

Previously, we noted that the Port's work focused around four areas: vaccines, port agreements, the international stop, and enhanced safety measures in our own terminals.

Since then, public health officials, cruise lines, and federal leaders addressed or reached major milestones on these topics, including new temporary, federal authority to sail directly from Seattle to Alaska without a stop in Canada, beginning CDC approval of port agreements for ships beginning sailing in other states, and the start of crew vaccinations by cruise lines. Locally we reached a major milestone with our Washington Governor announcing a full re-opening of our state on June 30.

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Cruise vessels have been sailing successfully for some time in the Mediterranean and parts of Asia. In the US, Cruising is expected to start this month from Port Everglades, and shortly afterwards from Galveston. We are watching all these locations closely for lessons learned.

Public Health Precautions

Throughout the Covid Pandemic, the Port of Seattle has prioritized public health. As we restart Cruise, we continue to prioritize measures for both the Cruise Lines and our own terminal operations that will not only prevent Covid from spreading on Cruise vessels, but provide clear protocols for responding if there are cases of Covid on Cruise vessels. We have been working with our local public health agencies through this time to make sure that all procedures meet our high local standards and are consistent with local efforts. These protocols are documented and committed to by all parties the “Port Agreements”.

These agreements are signed by each Cruise Lines, the Port, the State Department of Public Health and Public Health-Seattle & King County. They include and cover the following elements

- Cruise Ship Line protocols for the following
 - Embarkation Procedures –Restricted Passenger Voyages;
 - Procedures for Day of Embarkation Screening;
 - Emergency Response Plans;
 - Protocols for Contacting Emergency Medical Services (Non COVID-19 Related);
 - Protocols that Avoid Medical Evacuations at Sea;
 - Disembarkation Procedures in Event of COVID-19 Outbreak;
 - Procedures to Avoid Congregation of Embarking and Disembarking Travelers;
 - Procedures for Informing Port personnel who interact with travelers of COVID-19 Risks;
 - Procedures for Routine Testing and Symptom Monitoring of vessel crew, passengers and terminal personal who are expected to interact with travelers;
 - Procedures for Routine and Outbreak-Level Cleaning for Gathering Areas and Transportation Vehicles; and
 - Reporting Requirements of COVID-19 Cases During Voyages

- Cruise Ship Lines contractual arrangements with:
 - lodging facilities,
 - medical service providers, and
 - medical transportation service providers

- Cruise Ship Vaccinations Strategy
- Approved Ships and Capacity
- Cleaning requirements for Cruise Terminal

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Safety Enhancements at our Terminals

Throughout our cruise terminals, the Port has made improvements to enhance safety of our passengers and workers.

- We installed touchless fixtures in the restrooms and water bottle filling stations,
- Barriers are installed to limit face-to-face contact and technology implemented to provide touchless check in and passenger processing in many cases.
- Signage is installed to limit crowding and contact.
- We also reviewed and, where needed updated our ventilation systems to MERV 13 filtration.

Engagement with Community and Stakeholders

Engagement with community, attractions, retailers, and the many maritime businesses that serve the cruise sector is particularly essential this season.

We developed a robust public communications plan, which includes multiple new public briefings, webinars, and online resources to ensure that community, passengers, and crew know what to expect during the 2021 cruise season. Highlights of that work include:

- Created a new [webpage](#) for Business, Tourism and Community Partners; ship schedules will be posted here when confirmed.
- Providing a cruise update at two Visit Seattle webinars for hotels and the broader leisure travel industry
- Hosting a webinar with speakers from NCL, HAL and RCCL and moderated by Tom Norwalk, Visit Seattle; co-sponsored with DSA, Visit Seattle, Visit Bellevue, and Seattle Southside Regional Tourism Authority
- Launching a new waterfront-focused email newsletter

ATTACHMENTS TO THIS BRIEFING

- (1) Presentation slides

PREVIOUS COMMISSION ACTIONS OR BRIEFINGS

None