

# CRUISE Maine

— CRUISEMAINE.ORG —



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2023, **CruiseMaine** partnered with the Cruise Portland consortium to launch a destination management pilot program called **PortShare Promise**. PortShare Promise is a destination management initiative that seeks to make every cruise day positive for community members and cruise visitors.

Through active communication and real-time response, Cruise Portland – made up of Visit Portland, the City of Portland, Visit Freeport and the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport and Arundel Chamber of Commerce – pledges to listen, learn, and work to mitigate impacts from increased visitation on cruise days. Objectives of the program include:

- Inform, empower, and inspire all parties to engage in the PortShare Promise, ensuring a safe, manageable, profitable, and fun cruise season for all.
- Increase social license for cruise tourism in the region.
- Encourage input: comments, criticism, and compliments.
- Respond and to the extent possible, mitigate issues in real time.
- Analyze and report.

*Why PortShare Promise?* 2023 was Portland's busiest cruise season ever, with 2024 projected to increase even more significantly. This visitation is extremely valuable to the region. In 2023, cruise tourism generated at least \$13 million in economic impact to the greater Portland area, based on CruiseMaine's relatively dated spending data from 2018 research. In 2024, Portland is expected to see another 35% increase in passengers over 2023, pushing that impact over \$19 million<sup>1</sup>. These millions of dollars in revenue



<sup>1</sup>Again, these figures are based on 2018 data. It is all but certain that, given inflation, cruise visitors are spending more per person than they did in 2018.

support hundreds of jobs and local businesses, promote Maine-made products, and introduce tens of thousands of first-time visitors to Maine.

But around the global cruising community, the kind of rapid growth Portland is facing can cause community pushback. In fact, in 2022, Portland voters were asked to consider a referendum that would have slashed cruise visitation by over 90%. While this referendum overwhelmingly failed, residents have expressed concerns about the impact of increased pedestrian traffic in downtown (especially on Commercial St); a lack of infrastructure to support the influx of visitors, particularly public restrooms; and the environmental impacts of the vessels while tied up in port.

### *Making Every Cruise Day Great!*

The PortShare Promise pilot program focused on the five busiest weeks of the season between September 21 and October 26, during which 49 ships were expected to call, carrying nearly 110,000 passengers. For a short pilot program, PortShare Promise was incredibly successful, first and foremost because the program created a new narrative around cruise tourism in Portland – a narrative that cruise tourism stakeholders want to make cruise ship days a positive experience not just for visitors, but for local residents and businesses. How? By listening to the concerns of the community and proactively working to mitigate impacts. The narrative also drew upon Portland’s long history as a port city, and painted cruise as part of a robust working waterfront.

The PortShare Promise program – based on the successful Tourism Best Management Practices program from Juneau, AK – sought to both intervene to address real and perceived pain points with pilot initiatives and to collect baseline data to direct improvements to the program in coming years. A good destination management plan will ensure visitors have a positive visit but also that local businesses and residents can benefit from the economic activity without sacrificing the quality of life that led them to choose to live and work in the region. In other words, managing the destination will ensure a durable social license to operate because the benefits will clearly outweigh the impacts.

The launch of PortShare Promise generated significant positive press coverage for the program, but also for CruiseMaine, Cruise Portland, and the Maine Office of Tourism. In addition to this positive narrative, the program itself created good jobs and supported local businesses.

### ***PortShare Promise High Level Results***

PortShare Promise activities were designed around six key initiatives. Here we review the initiatives, some high level results and some brief recommendations on how to build on the program going forward. For detailed results, please refer to Section 2 of this memo.

**INITIATIVE:** *Activate a Community Feedback Hotline*

**RESULTS:** 43 submissions to the Community Feedback Hotline, with responses provided within 48 hours to all who requested one

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Increase promotion of the hotline, including through direct outreach to neighborhoods adjacent to the cruise terminals
- Improve the visitor form with different questions. (e.g., Do they plan on coming back?)

**INITIATIVE:** *Update the Cruise Portland Website and/or establish a PortShare Promise website*

**RESULTS:** A new Cruise Portland website at [www.cruiseportlandmaine.com](http://www.cruiseportlandmaine.com) and a new PortShare Promise website at: [www.portsharepromise.com](http://www.portsharepromise.com). The PortShare Promise site had 3600 visits, 6100 page views, and 3100 unique visitors.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Look at merging the PortShare Promise and Cruise Portland Maine websites
- Ensure content is consistent with City's waterfront page including terminal and pier regulations; link information when appropriate

**INITIATIVE:** *Provide flaggers (crossing guards) at busy intersections on Commercial St*

**RESULTS:** Positive media and community response to the OSHA 10-certified, union flaggers on Commercial Street; modest improvement to traffic transit times on the very busiest cruise days; several lessons learned if it is to make a real difference in traffic flow in future years.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:** In order to make a significant impact on traffic flow, several recommendations should be considered:

- Hire at least twice as many flaggers
- Train flaggers to hold pedestrians in groups to reduce number of times traffic is stopped
- Brand flaggers and train them as hospitality staff
- Consider deploying flaggers on only the highest traffic days to maximize impact with a limited budget

**INITIATIVE:** *Implement a proof of concept hop-on/hop-off shuttle*

**RESULTS:** Overwhelming demand for the hop-on/hop-off shuttle, with ridership at least 90% full at all times; mixed feedback on whether passengers got off and explored other areas of Portland or just used it to get an overview and returned to the terminal.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Implement a structured system of collecting data on ridership and where passengers get off
- Expand the volume of passengers served by at least double, at least during the first four hours, then taper service
- Look into adding an option for a Maine Mall shuttle for crew
- Develop mechanism to allow riders to pay
- Put out an RFP for the vendor
- Install tracking devices for the buses so riders can see when they will arrive
- Review route to consider eliminating stops on Washington Ave and in East Bayside and instead adding stops near Portland Museum of Art and others
- Create visible signage for stops and work with the City to place them. If possible, include QR codes to allow riders to know the current location of vehicles.

**INITIATIVE:** *Create a passenger education video to be shown on board cruise vessel*

**RESULTS:** A completed passenger education video, shot and edited during the five-week pilot and a commitment from nearly all partner lines to show the video onboard. (Due to the short timeline and the extensive technical formatting requirements, the video was not rolled out on most lines during the season, but we anticipate nearly all passengers will see the video in 2024.)

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Update video to accurately reflect 2024 program
- Improve restroom map mentioned in video
- Add to and/or edit the PortShare Promise website linked with the QR code at end of the video
- Remove section on flaggers if not funded as part of 2024 program

**INITIATIVE:** *Improve Public Relations and Communications to a variety of audiences and local stakeholders*

**RESULTS:** Media coverage included 24 news stories with over 410,000 views with an estimated PR value of \$39,900 (analysis by Critical Mention.) New PortShare Promise social media channels were created to publicize and reinforce program attributes.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- Continue promoting use of the hotline and expansion of the shuttle
- Expand educational resources, especially on emissions
- Schedule environmental ship tours / video of ship tour
- Work to promote followers or possibly consider suspending social media channels until program is more established

# GRANT PROJECT DETAIL RESULTS

## Community Feedback Hotline

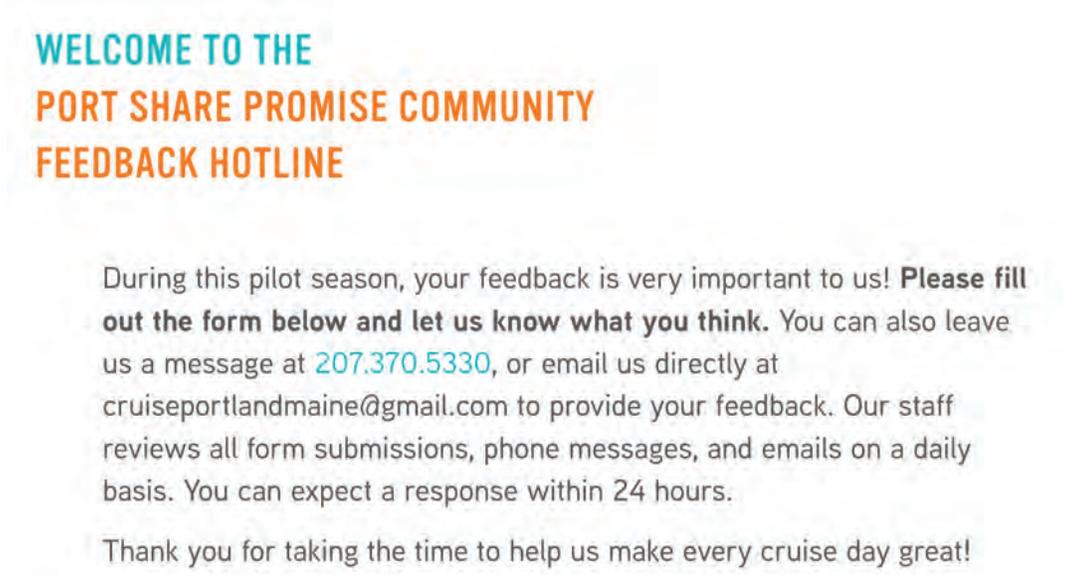
The Community Feedback Hotline is the backbone of this destination management program, just as it is the backbone of the Juneau, Alaska Tourism Best Management Practices program. To that end, the hotline is only useful if community members are aware of it and believe in it as a means for communicating with decision makers who can change something about how cruise tourism is managed.

The press conference kicked off our community outreach and messaging blast to make residents and business owners aware of the hotline. That strategy was followed up with QR code advertising in local neighborhood papers, out-of-home (Metro buses, for example), and posters printed and distributed to businesses in the Old Port.

Since the former method for expressing a complaint or request was to reach out to City staff or elected officials, we also wanted to inform those individuals that they could redirect constituents to the hotline where comments could be tracked and tabulated. To that end, Lynn Tillotson sent a letter to all City Council members as well as top City management staff to alert them of the full PortShare Promise program and in particular, the Community Feedback Hotline.

As with all new initiatives that require widespread public awareness, we made good progress in our pilot year, but we also clearly have more work to do in 2024.

The 43 submissions were exactly the kind of comments we were expecting and hoping to receive. A detailed spreadsheet of each submission is included as an addendum, but the table below summarizes them.





**Report: PSP Submissions by Category & by Repeat Submitter**

Created By: Kadie Glynn  
 Created On: 11/07/2023  
 Start Date: 9/18/2023  
 End Date: 11/07/2023  
 Concern Type: All

CALLS BY CONCERN CATEGORY			
Concern Date	Submitter ID	Category	Repeat Caller
9/21/2023	00007	Cruise Ship: Emissions	Yes
9/25/23	00014	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
9/27/23	00017	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
10/1/23	00020	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
10/4/23	00007	Cruise Ship: Emissions	Yes
10/06/2023	00007	Cruise Ship: Emissions	Yes
10/8/23	00024	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
10/10/2023	00026	Cruise Ship: Emissions	Yes
10/10/23	00026	Cruise Ship: Emissions	Yes
10/27/23	00033	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
10/30/23	00035	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
11/4/23	00036	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
11/4/23	00037	Cruise Ship: Emissions	No
10/8/23	00025	Cruise Ship: Noise/Light	No
11/2/23	00007	Cruise Ship: Noise/Light	Yes
9/21/23	00008	Cruise Ship: Other	No
10/5/23	00022	Cruise Ship: Other	No
9/25/2023	00013	Foot Traffic / Tours	No
9/23/23	00009	Hop on Hop off	No
9/18/23	00001	Hop on/Hop off	No
9/23/23	00010	Hop-on/Hop-off	No
10/1/23	00019	Hop-on/Hop-off	No
10/6/23	00023	Hop-on/Hop-off	No
10/17/2023	00028	Hop-on/Hop-off	No
10/24/23	00031	Hop-on/Hop-off	No
10/17/23	00030	Hop-on/Hop-off; Crossing Guards	No
10/17/2023	00029	Hounded by Homeless	No
10/11/23	00027	Maps	No
9/24/23	00012	Other: General Feedback / Revenue	No
9/18/23	00002	Restrooms	No
9/19/23	00004	Restrooms	No
9/20/23	00005	Restrooms	No
9/21/23	00006	Restrooms	No
9/25/23	00016	Restrooms	No
09/28/2023	00018	Restrooms	No
9/24/23	00011	Shopping	No
10/24/2023	00032	Shopping	No
10/30/23	00034	Shopping	No
9/19/23	00003	Traffic Congestion	No
9/25/23	00015	Traffic Congestion	No
10/2/23	00021	Traffic Congestion	No
11/4/23	00038	Traffic Congestion	No
9/29/23	00007	Vehicles: Bus/Trolley	Yes
<b>Total Number of Submissions</b>			<b>43</b>
<b>Total Number of Repeat Submitters</b>			<b>2</b>

CALLS PER REPEAT SUBMITTERS		
Submitter ID	# of Submission	Category
00007	4	Cruise Ship Emissions: 3 Hop-on/Hop-off: 1
00026	2	Cruise Ship Emissions: 2

## **Websites**

The PortSharePromise.com website launched in early September as a simple place to share the mission of the program, its key initiatives and to host the Community Feedback Hotline. (Phone calls are also supported but they go straight to voicemail, and a Cruise Portland staff member transfers the content of the call into the form). The website was originally intended to be a section of the new Cruise Portland website but the rest of that website was not going to be done in time for the pilot launch so it was separated out, with the understanding it could always be merged back into the Cruise Portland website if desired.

Over 3,100 unique visitors have come to the PortShare Promise website since its launch, and we anticipate more traffic once the onboard video is more widely shown to passengers in 2024 and beyond because there is a QR code directing visitors to the site. We also intend to grow awareness of the site through promotion all season and by making sure City of Portland staff know to direct residents who call or email to the hotline.

The new CruisePortlandMaine.com launched in November. The consortium is in discussions on how and whether to merge the two sites.

## **Commercial Street Flaggers**

The flaggers received by far the most media coverage following the initial press conference, and we know that in Juneau, crossing guards are the single most effective intervention they have implemented to improve the experience of both residents and visitors on busy cruise ship days. We also know that providing good union jobs to improve the safety of all pedestrians on busy ship days is a good message that resonates with the community.

Our results in the Portland pilot program were less decisive, however. On the one hand, stakeholders love the idea of managing traffic and pedestrian flow on Commercial St. In practice, the cost of implementing this initiative meant the intervention did not produce the results we were hoping for. With five flaggers hired full-time for five weeks, we were only able to staff half as many intersections as we had hoped (two instead of four) because the vendor found it was not safe or effective to have only one flagger per intersection. Commercial St is simply too wide and has traffic coming from too many directions to make a single flagger able to manage an intersection alone. Staffing was also an issue. If one flagger called out sick, there was no one to provide breaks so we were sometimes down to flagging only one intersection while someone was on break. With 18 crosswalks located between Franklin St and Becky's Diner, staffing one or even two intersections simply didn't do enough to make a real difference. We also got a couple hotline comments requesting a different strategy for helping vehicles get out from side streets, rather than just focusing on the pedestrians crossing Commercial St.

Because we launched the program so quickly, there wasn't enough time to do extensive training with the flaggers. We would like to see them branded to seem more like an aid to visitors / pedestrians and less like construction workers. Anecdotally, we were told some pedestrians even avoided the intersections with flaggers because they thought there was construction happening. We also used

City of Portland barricades to block one of the two crosswalks per flagged intersection but many pedestrians ignored the barricade and crossed anyway. A more effective, long-term solution should include hardscaping, elimination of some of the double crosswalks and more flaggers.

Given the limited effectiveness of the flaggers within the constraints we had in 2023, we are working with the City on two possible paths for 2024: (1) suspend the initiative for 2024 and pursue a more robust data collection project on traffic impacts on cruise days, ideally by partnering with Maine DOT to use their platform, Streetlight. This option could help clarify the need for flaggers. (2) Find a way – either through a vendor or with volunteers – to staff ten flaggers for five key intersections only on the very busiest cruise days: the ten days in 2024 scheduled to have over 5,000 passengers in port. In this option, we would still like to partner with Maine DOT on data collection.

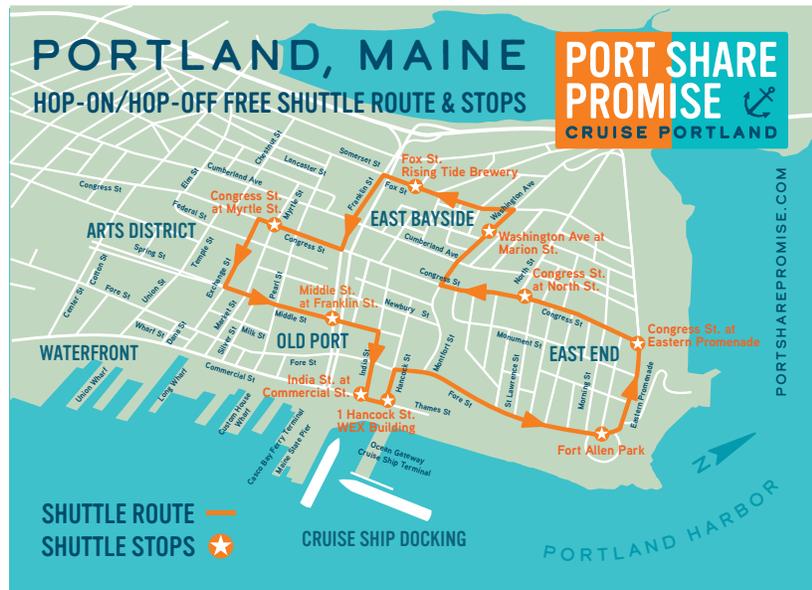
### Hop-on/hop-off shuttle

The hop-on/hop-off shuttle was conceived as a convenient mechanism to move visiting cruise passengers from the cruise terminal disembarkation point at the end of Commercial Street to points throughout the greater downtown area. Stops along the route allowed passengers to access points of interest they often miss, including the Washington Avenue corridor, East Bayside, the Portland Museum of Art, Congress Street retail, restaurants and galleries, and the greater Old Port area.



Wheelchair-accessible and attractive, the shuttle enjoyed steady demand and received many positive compliments from passengers. The service was so popular, in fact, that a second bus was added on high visitation days.

A free branded route map (available in printed and digital form) aided passengers in planning their shuttle use with route stops identified with branded street-surface decals. As an added benefit, the shuttles served as rolling billboards for the PortShare Promise program, with the program’s QR code prominently displayed on three sides of the vehicle.



Complete ridership statistics on this free, unticketed service were impractical to capture due to short staffing (one driver on board) and high demand. However, it was clear from observations that the shuttle service was extremely popular with visitors. According to Damon Rodzen, owner of the shuttle service provider Atlantic Limousine:

*The shuttle was a resounding success, exceeding all expectations as ridership far surpassed initial estimates. It was full most of the time and we often had to turn people away because it was at capacity. The line to board the shuttle became a lively gathering point, echoing with conversations about the areas they were about to experience. The service was also particularly helpful for visitors with disabilities—cruise ships are by their nature a very accessible form of tourism, and having the shuttle operating in Portland helped those visitors with mobility challenges see more of the city.*

Two 14-passenger vehicles were never intended to be sufficient for thousands of passengers but rather to demonstrate there was demand, which it clearly did. Beginning in 2024, the intent is to expand the hop-on/hop-off Shuttle, making it a paid (or sponsored) service while implementing a system to track utilization.

### **Onboard Video**

The video can be found at [PortSharePromise.com/on-board-passenger-info-video](https://PortSharePromise.com/on-board-passenger-info-video). As mentioned above, the video had to be shot and edited during the five-week pilot, so by the time it was sent to the cruise lines, there wasn't enough time to get the technical formatting needs accommodated. Nonetheless, all lines expressed a willingness to show the video, and we expect full participation in 2024.

The video will need some minor edits if the flagger program is discontinued in 2024, but otherwise, it was purposely shot to have timeless content.

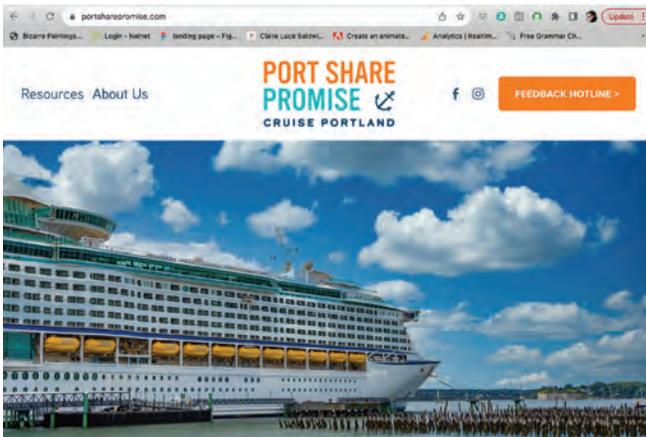
## Public relations and communications

### Communications strategy and message

Learning from other successful travel management programs (like that in place in Juneau, Alaska,) PortShare Promise provided a new communication infrastructure (website, education pieces, community relations program, and comment line) to facilitate real-time issues awareness and management.

Key components of the public relations and communications strategy included:

- Develop a campaign brand (PortShare Promise) for use in all outbound communications, including advertising, signage and collateral, education materials, web, social, and other reciprocal communications.
- Use Advertising, Social, Public, and Community Relations, and Education programs to inform, educate, and inspire all to participate in the Port Share Promise initiative.
- Build branded and active assets, including a QR code accessible website, and comment collection mechanisms (Google form and phone message) to capture and respond to feedback.
- Initiate branded crossing guards to keep cruise day traffic moving smoothly, minimizing delays, frustrations, and inconvenience for vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Improve safety.
- Create and implement a public relations program including development of a news kit, news releases, background fact sheets.
- Execute program launch news conference
- Stage Cruise day “Flag Raising” at Portland Observatory



# HOW TO PORTLAND



## Press Conference and Coverage

PortShare Promise kicked off the public facing stage of the program with news releases and advisories in mid-September and a press conference at Portland's Ocean Gateway on September 21. The press conference was well covered by the media, including all the Portland TV stations, Maine Public and several print outlets. Speakers included:

- Sarah Flink, CruiseMaine Director
- Bill Needelman, Waterfront Director, City of Portland
- Jason Shedlock, Representative of Laborers Local 327
- Peg Puza, Greater Portland Landmarks
- Lynn Tillotson, Executive Director Visit Portland
- Captain Mark Harlow, Carnival Legend

Press coverage in September 2024 was overwhelmingly positive, generating a total of 24 stories, with an aggregate audience of over 400,000 Maine viewers and a publicity value of \$40,000.



**Portland Press Herald: Plan takes on Old Port congestion as cruise ship arrivals ramp up**

The Old Port might soon be easier to navigate thanks to a new program that aims to ease the congestion and tourism traffic from the fall flood of cruise ship visitors.

Five groups, coming together as the Cruise Portland partnership, are launching a pilot program called PortShare Promise that will place traffic flaggers across the Old Port, offer better transportation options, and educate visitors on respecting the city and its residents.

“It is our hope that this is a really successful program. And that if so, other cruise-destination communities in Maine will want to pursue their own versions,” Flink said. “We’d want to share what successes and lessons we learned from this Greater Portland Area pilot and be there at the table helping support and facilitate anything we can.”



**MaineBiz: Pilot program will help manage busy cruise ship season in Portland**

Portland is a popular cruise stop that...generates over \$3 million per year in tariffs and fees. Port services, ship purchases and passenger and crew spending in Greater Portland amount to an estimated \$15 million annually.

“Our commitment remains with our community, and the surge in pedestrian and bus traffic that occurs on cruise days has led us to seek best practices across the industry to help manage congestion,” said Visit Portland Executive Director Lynn Tillotson.

“Cruise passengers come to visit Maine from across the nation and the world, different from those who arrive by car, who come largely from within a 250-mile radius or less,” said Sarah Flink, executive director of CruiseMaine. “Almost 30% of cruise visitors want to return to Maine on a longer trip, and that’s about the most cost-effective tourism promotion we have.”

**WGME: Portland gears up for fall tourism with 'Portshare Promise' to ease cruise ship congestion**

Summer may be winding down but that doesn't mean tourism season is stepping off the gas.

Groups are coming together this fall to try to manage cruise ship congestion in Portland and surrounding communities.

They're calling it Portshare Promise and one change you could see are crossing guards on some of the busy Commercial Street sidewalks.



**WMTW: 'Port share promise' from Cruise Maine looks to increase comfort during tourist season**

The "Port share promise" from Cruise Maine, aims to manage vehicle and pedestrian traffic flow in Portland's Old Port. The plan includes crossing guards on Commercial Street and a free hop-on-hop-off shuttle for cruise passengers to visit sites within Portland.

In a news conference on Thursday afternoon, officials hope to smooth the experience for both tourists and residents in the city.

**A pilot program will attempt to reduce traffic, and improve safety when cruise ships visit Portland**

Tourism advocates say cruise ship operations in Portland bring business to the waterfront but acknowledge that some residents have raised concerns about traffic jams and pedestrian safety when tour vessels are in town.

On Thursday, a new pilot program to address those issues was launched by CruiseMaine and Cruise Portland.

Bill Needelman, Waterfront Coordinator for Portland, says revenues from cruise ships are critical to the Ocean Gateway, the Maine State Pier, and other harbor-front businesses.

"Cruise ships are currently estimated to generate \$3 million for the city, but they also support stevedoring, pilotage, and other harbor services that need the business," he said.

## Social Media

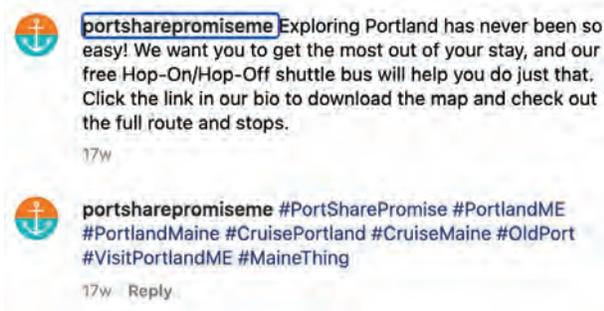
Utilizing Facebook and Instagram, PortShare Promise built a solid social media foundation for the program. In two months (Sept 15- Nov 14), the social program resulted in:

- 80 new Instagram Followers
- 187 new Facebook Page Likes and 203 Facebook Page Followers
- 10,579 Facebook Page Engaged Users
- 2,686 users reached on Instagram organically, and 62,583 users via Instagram ads
- 12,880 post engagements on Instagram
- 13,192 post engagements on Facebook

\*for more detailed statistics on our social media engagement, please see the attached social media recap in the next section

Building this foundation was crucial and will be extremely beneficial into the next cruise season. With a solid base following of social media users, as long as this component is funded and properly staffed, the growth rate will increase next season with a consistent posting and boosting schedule.

Examples of some social media posts:



## Paid Advertising

- **Print advertising:** ¼ page ads featuring QR code link to hotline/hotlink community response feature (Portland Press Herald and Forecaster, three regional editions)
- **Out-of-Home:** 7 rear bus posters on Portland’s Metro bus systems and bus wraps on hop-on/hop-off buses featuring program branding with QR code link to hotline/hotlink community response feature. hop-on/hop-off bus wraps with Program branding and QR Code
- **Digital Programmatic Display Advertising:** 500,000 impressions in the Portland metro area utilizing Portland Press Herald, USA Today, NY Times, Yahoo, Forbes, Washington Post, Realtor.com, Thekitchn. com, MSN, ABC News, and Fox News.

**PORT SHARE PROMISE**  
CRUISE PORTLAND

**LET'S MAKE EVERY CRUISE DAY GREAT!**

This year, CruisePortland is proud to present **PortShare Promise**, a pilot program designed to support the community and visitors with resources and information gathering to help our city welcome and manage busy cruise days in the port of Portland.

*To make travel easier and ease congestion, this season we're adding:*

- + Crosswalk management in the port area to keep pedestrians and vehicles moving smoothly along Commercial Street.
- + A handicapped-accessible Hop-on/Hop-off bus to take cruise visitors from the terminal to hot spots throughout the city.
- + A PortShare Promise hotline for community members and visitors to fill us in on their cruise day experience be it comment, compliment or criticism.

Want to learn more?  
Leave a comment?  
Scan me →

PortSharePromise.com

CruisePortland ©2023



**PORT SHARE PROMISE**  
CRUISE PORTLAND

Making every cruise day great! →

**PORT SHARE PROMISE**  
CRUISE PORTLAND

Making every cruise day great! →

## Publicity Report 9.25.23

Sep 14, 2023

Portland Press Herald

<https://www.pressherald.com/2023/09/13/plan-takes-on-old-port-congestion-as-cruise-ship-arrivals-ramp-up/>

Sep 14, 2023

Mainebiz

[https://www.mainebiz.biz/article/pilot-program-will-help-manage-busy-cruise-ship-season-in-portland?utm\\_source=ActiveCampaign&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=Daily+Report%3A+Maine+businesses+brace+for+Lee+%7C+New+cohort+picked+at+Roux+Institute+%7C+High-tech+manufacturer+could+add+80+jobs+in+Old+Town&utm\\_campaign=Daily+Report+091423](https://www.mainebiz.biz/article/pilot-program-will-help-manage-busy-cruise-ship-season-in-portland?utm_source=ActiveCampaign&utm_medium=email&utm_content=Daily+Report%3A+Maine+businesses+brace+for+Lee+%7C+New+cohort+picked+at+Roux+Institute+%7C+High-tech+manufacturer+could+add+80+jobs+in+Old+Town&utm_campaign=Daily+Report+091423)

Sep 21, 2023

WGME/Fox 23 Teaser

<https://wgme.com/news/local/portland-gears-up-for-fall-tourism-with-portshare-promise-to-ease-cruise-ship-congestion-cruise-portland-visit-portland-maine-tourists>

Sep 21, 2023

Newscenter Maine

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y5LJ6xNkan0>

Sep 21, 2023

WGME 13

<https://wgme.com/news/local/portshare-promise-address-issues-cruise-ship-passenger-traffic-safety-portland-maine>

Sep 21, 2023

WMTW

<https://www.wmtw.com/article/port-share-promise-from-cruise-maine-looks-to-increase-comfort-during-tourist-season/45251790#>

Sep 21, 2023

Maine Public

<https://www.mainepublic.org/news/2023-09-22/a-pilot-program-will-attempt-to-reduce-traffic-improve-safety-when-cruise-ships-visit-portland>

Sep 22, 2023

Portland Press Herald

[https://www.pressherald.com/2023/09/22/letter-to-the-editor-portland-cruise-visitor-plan-beggars-belief/?utm\\_source=Newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_](https://www.pressherald.com/2023/09/22/letter-to-the-editor-portland-cruise-visitor-plan-beggars-belief/?utm_source=Newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_)

Sep 22, 2023

Portland Press Herald

Photos of Traffic Flaggers on Commercial Street.

<https://www.dropbox.com/scl/fi/ga02btbxwwh8xg55rzilf/PSP-PPH-Local-State.pdf?rlkey=brf7u6hyya0jx0hs9g2omugek&dl=0>



# Digital Marketing Report

September 18, 2023 - November 7, 2023

Prepared by 

## Your North Star Metric



Social Media  
Growth &  
Community  
Engagement



## What We've Done To Reach Your North Star Metric

### Social Media Management

- **Created and optimized new Facebook and Instagram pages** specifically for the PortShare Promise program.
- **Attended brainstorming calls** with the marketing team to determine the plan of action.
- **Created 6-7 social media posts per week** to engage current and new audience. Posts were focused on receiving feedback, promoting the various pieces of the program and welcoming the incoming cruise ships. Content was slightly more limited than expected due to the lack of vox pop and flagging ceremonies.
- **Monitored comments and messages.** Led users to the website to submit their feedback through the community feedback hotline.
- **Joined local Facebook groups** to interact with local users and bring attention to the PSP page.
- **Interacted with local businesses on Facebook and Instagram** to draw attention to the PSP pages and attract new followers.
- **Boosted posts** to increase engagement and the overall follower counts.

### Social Media Paid Advertising

- **Ran an ongoing engagement campaign** to increase Facebook page likes and Instagram follower counts.
- **Ran an ongoing traffic campaign** to lead users to the community feedback hotline.



## Highlights

- ★ We gained **80 new Instagram Followers** since creating the profile in mid-September.
- ★ We gained **187 new Facebook Page Likes and 203 Facebook Page Followers** since creating the page in mid-September.
- ★ Throughout the life of the project, there were **10,579 Facebook Page Engaged Users**.
- ★ Throughout the life of the project, we **reached 2,686 users on Instagram organically, and 62,583 users via Instagram ads**.
- ★ Throughout the life of the project, we **received 12,880 post engagements on Instagram**.
- ★ Throughout the life of the project, we **received 13,192 post engagements on Facebook**.



## Facebook & Instagram Growth

### Facebook

**Page Engaged Users:** 10,579  
**Post Impressions:** 270,859  
**Post Reach:** 60,343  
**Page Views:** 4,972  
**Post Engagements:** 13,192  
**Link Clicks:** 1,523  
**Page Followers:** 203

### Instagram

**Organic Post Impressions:** 2,922  
**Organic Post Reach:** 2,686  
**Organic Post Engagements:** 318  
**Paid Post Impressions:** 91,853  
**Paid Post Reach:** 62,583  
**Paid Post Engagements:** 12,562  
**Followers:** 80

From mid-September to early November, we were able to achieve high engagement and reach with your target audience. There was a large variety of people engaging with the posts, some who enjoyed the program and others who provided honest criticism.



## Facebook Management: Top 5 Posts

Post	Post Engaged Us...	Likes & Other Reacti...	Post Comme...	Post Shar...
<p>Don't be looking for Santa because the PortShare Promise HoHo Bus stands for Hop-On/Hop-Off! A service provided to passengers and crew of visiting cruise ships offering continuous service to and from the Ocean Gateway Terminal around a peninsular route to popular hot spots! <a href="https://bit.ly/44XMkZ">https://bit.ly/44XMkZ</a></p>	2,819	183	67	22
<p>Wondering where the public restroom facilities are located in the Old Port? We've got you covered! Download our facilities map to ensure you're always prepared. <a href="https://bit.ly/3PSPtIv">https://bit.ly/3PSPtIv</a></p>	2,696	93	72	18
<p>Photos from PortShare Promise's post Join us in welcoming the Scenic Luxury Cruises Eclipse to Portland this morning! Arriving from Boston, this luxurious yacht carries 240 guests, and provides a wide variety of unique activities, excursions and dining experiences. <a href="https://portsharepromise.com">portsharepromise.com</a></p>	852	74	5	4
<p>The economic impact of cruise tourism in Portland is significant, which is one of the many reasons we're dedicated to making every cruise day great. Help us continue our mission for years to come by providing your feedback on our pilot season. Reach out now: <a href="https://bit.ly/44XNghj">https://bit.ly/44XNghj</a></p>	475	162	23	4
<p>Have you driven or walked by our new banner yet? It's another great reminder to share your feedback in our Community Feedback Hotline! <a href="https://bit.ly/44XNghj">https://bit.ly/44XNghj</a></p>	293	91	14	3

These five posts had the highest number of engaged users, likes, comments and shares. Four out of the five were boosted. The only one that was not is the post welcoming Scenic Luxury Cruises.

This shows that your audience was interested in the services you offered and ready to provide their feedback with us in the comments section.



## Instagram Management: Top 5 Posts

Post Display	Reach	Engagement	Likes Count	Comments Cou...
<p>Carnival's Spirit Class Legend enters the Port of Portland today. Crewed by Starn Judd Gorch, she was built in...  <small>Instagram: @starn_judd_gorch</small></p>	250	7	6	1
<p>RCCG Liberty arrives from Boston this morning! Built in...  <small>Instagram: @rccgliberty</small></p>	184	10	9	1
<p>Registered in Malta, the beautiful Celebrity Summit visits...  <small>Instagram: @celebritysummit</small></p>	134	9	8	1
<p>Wondering where the public restroom facilities are located in...  <small>Instagram: @portsharepromise</small></p>	111	9	7	1
<p>Join us in welcoming the Scenic Eclipse to Portland this...  <small>Instagram: @scenic_eclipse</small></p>	89	10	9	1

These five posts were the most engaging for your Instagram audience and brought in the most organic likes.

Growing an audience organically on Instagram is more difficult due to the way the algorithm is set up. Many users do not see the content from profiles they follow. To assist with this, we shared some posts to stories, boosted some posts, and utilized hashtags.



## Top 3 Facebook Ads

Ad	Reach	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Post Engag...
<p><b>New Engagement Ad</b>            The economic impact of cruise tourism in Portland is significant, which is one of the many reasons we're dedicated to making every cruise day great. Help us continue our mission for years to come by providing your feedback on our pilot season. Reach out now: <a href="https://bit.ly/44XNghJ">https://bit.ly/44XNghJ</a></p>	22,163	56,513	1,591	2.82%	615
<p><b>Feedback Hotline</b>            Got a comment or question? See something that needs attention? We're all ears! To leave a comment or complaint (or to give a compliment) about the PortShare Promise program scan this QR code. You can call or fill out our easy form. We promise to respond if you need an answer within one business day! Your ideas and observations are important as we work to make every cruise day great for all!</p>	11,311	40,332	399	0.99%	295
<p><b>New Engagement Ad</b>            The PortShare Promise program is designed to make every cruise day great for visitors and members of our coastal communities. Worried about crowded streets? Our Traffic Safety Guides help manage vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow in the Old Port. Plus, our community feedback hotline is always open for questions, concerns or compliments! Visit our website to learn more about our initiative and leave your feedback. <a href="http://portsharepromise.com">portsharepromise.com</a></p>	12,427	38,510	1,061	2.76%	455

We ran two separate ongoing campaigns on Facebook. The first focused on gaining engagement and page likes, and the other focused on obtaining link clicks to the community feedback hotline.

The engagement-focused ads had a significant impact on the growth of the Facebook audience, while the feedback-focused ads had an above-average click-through rate (CTR).



## Top 3 Instagram Ads

Ad	Reach	Impressions	Clicks	CTR	Post Engag...
<b>New Engagement Ad</b> The economic impact of cruise tourism in Portland is significant, which is one of the many reasons we're dedicated to making every cruise day great. Help us continue our mission for years to come by providing your feedback on our pilot season. Click the link in our bio to reach out now.	45,909	58,297	49	0.08%	11,604
<b>Traffic Safety Guides</b> Explore the Old Port safely with our Traffic Safety Guides! When you're headed over to the shops or back to the ship, make sure you find a PortShare Promise Traffic Safety Guide to get you safely across the street. portsharepromise.com	4,551	5,938	16	0.27%	83
<b>Banner</b> Have you driven or walked by our new banner yet? It's another great reminder to share your feedback in our Community Feedback Hotline! <a href="https://bit.ly/44XNghJ">https://bit.ly/44XNghJ</a>	4,348	5,914	22	0.37%	198

We did not run any feedback-focused campaigns on Instagram. Due to the nature of the platform, we focused on engagement campaigns to grow the audience and obtain more post likes.

This helped significantly and we were able to achieve over 11.8k likes on the photo of the cruise ship in port.



## Supporting Tactics To Reach Your North Star Metric

### Programmatic Display Advertising

- To increase awareness of the program, we ran programmatic display ads on various websites targeted to users in the Portland area.
  - Websites:
    - Portland Press Herald, USA Today, NY Times, Yahoo, Forbes, Washington Post, Realtor.com, Thekitchn.com, MSN, ABC News, Fox News

### OOH Advertising (Greater Portland METRO)

- In addition to the programmatic display ads, we also utilized OOH advertising through the Greater Portland METRO to increase brand awareness and bring users to the website. These ads were displayed on the back of seven buses.

### Print Advertising

- Lastly, we ran print ads through the Portland Press Herald and multiple local weeklies to increase awareness of the program and encourage local residents to provide feedback.
  - Weeklies:
    - Portland Forecaster, Northern Forecaster, Southern Forecaster, Kennebunk Post, Scarborough Leader, SoPo/Cape Elizabeth Sentry



## Examples of the Print, OOH and Display Ads



[More Photos](#)



[More Photos](#)



[More Photos](#)

\*Designs were created by Murphy Empire.



## Programmatic Display Ad Performance

**Total Impressions: 482,085    Total Clicks: 289    CTR: 0.06%**

<b>MSN</b> <b>Impressions: 180,757</b> <b>Clicks: 81</b>	<b>Yahoo</b> <b>Impressions: 118,279</b> <b>Clicks: 52</b>	<b>Fox News</b> <b>Impressions: 64,621</b> <b>Clicks: 35</b>	<b>USA Today</b> <b>Impressions: 40,229</b> <b>Clicks: 31</b>
<b>Portland Press Herald</b> <b>Impressions: 43,553</b> <b>Clicks: 60</b>	<b>Realtor.com</b> <b>Impressions: 19,681</b> <b>Clicks: 17</b>	<b>NY Times</b> <b>Impressions: 8567</b> <b>Clicks: 6</b>	<b>Forbes</b> <b>Impressions: 3,349</b> <b>Clicks: 3</b>
<b>Washington Post</b> <b>Impressions: 2,471</b> <b>Clicks: 3</b>	<b>ABC News</b> <b>Impressions: 337</b> <b>Clicks: 0</b>	<b>Thekitchn.com</b> <b>Impressions: 241</b> <b>Clicks: 1</b>	



## Conclusion

Overall, over the last two months, we built a solid social media foundation for PortShare Promise and exposed the program to a large portion of the Portland community. Building this foundation was crucial and will be extremely beneficial going into the next cruise season. Now that we have a base following and social media users are aware of the program, the growth rate will speed up when we are back to a consistent posting and boosting schedule.

Social media is a great place to get unfiltered feedback from local residents. Whether they share their feedback via the hotline or not, it helps keep the conversation alive and draw interest from community members that they are connected to.

Throughout the off-season, we recommend posting occasionally to keep the pages somewhat active. Continue engaging with local businesses to remind them of the program.



## Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 12, 2023



#### Cruise Portland Launches Pilot Program - PortShare Promise A Tourism Management Program to Meet Fall Peak Cruise Season

PORTLAND, Maine — Cruise Portland, a collaborative tourism promotion group consisting of the City of Portland, CruiseMaine, Visit Portland, Visit Freeport, and the Kennebunk/Kennebunkport and Arundel Chamber of Commerce, will launch a new Tourism Best Management Practices (TBMP) program, PortShare Promise, on September 21 for the fall cruise ship season to Portland.

Modeled on the successful, industry-standard TBMP program initiated more than 25 years ago in Juneau, Alaska—one of the busiest cruise destinations in the US—Portland's PortShare Promise (<http://portsharepromise.com>) pilot initiative will seek to provide safety and congestion management tools as well as a community feedback hotline designed to collect comments, concerns, and compliments from community members and visitors. Cruise Portland will aim to respond with real-time feedback within one business day.

One key element of the PortShare Promise program seeks to manage vehicular and pedestrian traffic flow on Commercial Street in Portland's Old Port by introducing Traffic Safety Personnel provided by Laborers Local 327 at the busiest crosswalks. In addition, Cruise Portland will provide a free Hop-on Hop-off shuttle, enabling cruise visitors to visit city sites along Washington, Fox, Congress, and Commercial streets.

A QR code-accessible website will provide program details, information, and a direct link to the PortShare Promise Community Feedback Hotline.

"Cruise tourism is extremely beneficial to the region," says Visit Portland Executive Director Lynn Tillotson, explaining Portland's popularity as a cruise port that sees more than 80 ships to the city between the end of August and the first of November. "With more than 157,000 people visiting

Portland and surrounding areas by cruise ship during our peak fall season, we have an opportunity to introduce folks from around the world to southern Maine. However, our commitment remains with our community, and the surge in pedestrian and bus traffic that occurs on cruise days has led us to seek best practices across the industry to help manage congestion. We turned to Juneau, a city much smaller than Portland that receives more than 1.5 million visitors per year, to learn what has helped them greatly improve community impact during significant growth in cruise visits.”

The Canada New England cruise itinerary typically departs from home ports in Boston or New York on the U.S. end or Montréal or Québec City on the Canadian side, tracing a beautiful scenic route along the coast of southern New England, Maine, Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and down the St. Lawrence Seaway into Québec.

“Cruise passengers come to visit Maine from across the nation and the world, different from those who arrive by car, who come largely from within a 250-mile radius or less,” says Sarah Flink, Executive Director of CruiseMaine. “Almost 30 percent of cruise visitors want to return to Maine on a longer trip, and that’s about the most cost-effective tourism promotion we have.”

The economic impact of cruise tourism in Portland is significant, with an average ship visit providing substantial passenger fee revenue to the city as well as money spent onshore by passengers and crew at restaurants, shops, and on excursions within the city and to surrounding communities like Freeport and the Kennebunks. Further, cruise tourism is an important component of business for the working waterfront, including the region’s harbor pilots, longshoremen, and tug operators.

“A port requires significant infrastructure to service commercial and leisure traffic,” Flink explains. “Without the substantial revenue provided by the cruise ships who frequent Maine ports, we would be likely unable to offer the mandated services required by other marine traffic.”

Portland is estimated to receive over \$3 million per year in tariffs and fees. Port services and ship purchases, together with passenger and crew spending in the greater Portland area, amount to an estimated \$15 million on an annual basis.

A schedule of anticipated ship arrivals in the Port of Portland can be found at <https://maine.portcall.com/>. For more information about the PortShare Promise, please visit [www.portsharepromise.com](http://www.portsharepromise.com).

**Media Contacts:**

**Kristen Levesque, [kristen@kristenlevesquepr.com](mailto:kristen@kristenlevesquepr.com)**

**Sarah Flink, [director@cruisemaine.org](mailto:director@cruisemaine.org)**

