

A DEEP-WATER DOCK FOR KINGSTON

A CASE FOR SUPPORT

INTRODUCTION

Lake cruising plays a key role in tourism and with the proper infrastructure, can boost Kingston's offerings to visitors immensely. Great Lakes cruise ships attract travellers who want to take in the natural beauty of their surroundings as they cruise and who also want to have authentic experiences at their ports of call. Demand for Great Lakes cruises is increasing, in part due to the trend towards slower travel and travellers' desire to choose authentic, safe trips that enable them to explore a region while being mindful of their own environmental footprint.

Investment in a deep-water dock and related infrastructure to accommodate lake cruise ships has demonstrated community economic benefits, as well as benefits for local cultural assets, culinary producers, and more.

THE GROWING DEMAND

The demand for Great Lakes cruises is booming in 2023. In 2022, there were 150,000 visits to ports on both sides of the Canada/U.S. border, generating \$125 million in economic impact for the region. In 2023, there are currently nine ships offering Great Lakes cruises. (Each ship may make multiple visits each year to the communities on their itineraries.) It is anticipated that 2023 will set another yearly record with nearly 170,000 cruise passenger visits to regional ports, up 15%, with an economic impact of \$180 million for the region, due to the increase in passengers, port visits, growing price premium for cruises and increased daily spend by passengers. [Source: Cruise the Great Lakes study] Great Lakes cruise ships will meet the increasing demand, not by building bigger ships, but by adding more frequent trips and to new ports of call.

CURRENT STATE OF GREAT LAKES CRUISING IN KINGSTON

In 2022, Kingston brought three cruise ships to dock in Kingston, in addition to the Canadian Empress, run by local company St. Lawrence Cruise Lines.

2022 visits to Kingston: 40 visits; 3,312 passengers

Name	Number of visits to YGK	Number of passengers/crew	Needs tendering in
Ocean Explorer	4	162/99	Yes
Kawartha Voyageur	12	45/12	No
Canadian Empress	22	66/14	No
MS Hamburg	2	385/175	Yes

POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH

A number of cruise ships already travel the Great Lakes from May to October, but only a few of them have been able to stop at Kingston, due to the lack of a deep-water dock. All but the smallest ships that stop at Kingston have to tender out passengers and crew to shore. This involves using a smaller boat to carry passengers from the ship to the port. Because there are no specific tender boats in Kingston, there is an increased safety risk and additional cost to arrange for smaller boats to bring passengers ashore. These factors act as deterrents to cruise companies that might otherwise include Kingston in their itineraries.

Tourism Kingston can assist cruise operators in creating new experiences for their passengers and extending their stay in Kingston, both during a port of call and before and after their cruise. Travel Trade staff at Tourism Kingston have strong professional connections with the Great Lakes cruise industry, promoting Kingston as a destination to national and international cruise operators through trade shows like the annual Cruise Canada New England Symposium and through collaborative work with organizations like the Great Lakes Cruise Association and RTO 9 to promote local and regional cruise opportunities.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

“Communities around the world have long ago recognized the economic and social value of being part of a cruise itinerary. Not only are there economic benefits; visiting cruisers can get to know the host city, absorb its culture and spread the word about our quality of life.”

– Stephen Burnett, Great Lakes Cruise Association

The ability to dock directly at the port has a number of advantages:

- // It cuts down on travel time from ship to shore and adds to the time that passengers have to explore the community.
- // It also allows crew members to go ashore, adding to the number of visitors to the community.
- // It allows ship operators to add Kingston as a port to their multi-day itineraries, offering new experiences for their passengers and increased business for Kingston's businesses.



authentic

Cruise passengers typically spend between \$100 and \$400 at each port during their cruise, depending on whether their shore excursion is a quick daytime visit or an overnight stay. In a 2021 survey, 63% of people who have taken a cruise say that they have returned to a destination that they first visited via cruise ship. [Source: CLIA SPI Survey, November 2021]

Cruise ships contribute port fees to the communities they visit, usually a small set fee per passenger, in addition to a set rate per gross registered tonne of the ship. The City of Kingston received over \$3,000 in 2022 at Crawford Wharf in port fees.

Active collaboration between cruise operators and their destination ports can maximize the benefits of the trips for passengers and for the communities they visit. For example, marine agents for cruise operators can connect with farmers and producers ahead of the cruise to pick up fresh local supplies for their on-board meals. A number of Great Lakes cruise operators offer both on-board educational talks and shore excursions, which are attractive selling points for travellers who want to hear from local experts on the history, culture, and biosphere of the community they are visiting, or take in a concert or art show.

Creating a welcoming stay for cruise passengers is an important component of growing visitation to Kingston, and location for the port is key. Having passengers disembark directly next to the Great Lakes Museum (soon to be home to the SS Keewatin) and Kingston's waterfront trail will also provide a unique experience for them. They will be minutes away from two other museums, city parks, and downtown shops and restaurants in walkable downtown Kingston. The historic, cultural, and natural assets in and around this location make this an extremely attractive port of call for cruise ships.

Kingston is well positioned to attract both existing cruise ships that currently travel between Ontario and New York State and new operators who want to tap into the Great Lakes market. Kingston's location in the Thousand Islands also offers operators unique opportunities to showcase the amazing natural resources of the region.

THE THUNDER BAY SUCCESS STORY

In 2009, as part of its waterfront revitalization plan, Thunder Bay opened Pool 6 Cruise Terminal, beginning upgrades to the site of a former grain elevator. That year, the site had \$250,000 in capital upgrades.

In 2012, the cruise ship terminal hosted HMCS Ville de Quebec, which drew approximately 9,000 visitors for public tours during its four-day stay.

In 2020, Hapag-Lloyd's ship Hanseatic Inspiration docked at the terminal, the first cruise ship to visit the city since 2012. The ship made a 12-hour stop as part of a 14-day Great Lakes cruise. That same year, with knowledge of capital improvements to come to the terminal, Viking Cruise Lines confirmed plans to include Thunder Bay as a port starting in 2022.

From 2021 to 2023, the city invested \$2.5 million for capital upgrades, using MAT funding to seed municipal, provincial, and federal investment in the site. Cruise Port Thunder Bay has shore power, pumping-out services, upgraded fenders and bollards, and other amenities. With the ability to dock directly at the port, cruise ships are available to easily refill their supplies, including stocking up on food from local producers. The upgrades have also allowed the city to welcome tall ships, as well as naval ships for public tours.

- // In 2022, Cruise Port Thunder Bay welcomed two ships and nine port visits (including seven turnarounds), resulting in \$6.1 million in economic impact.
- // In 2023, it welcomed four ships and 14 port visits (including three turnarounds), resulting in \$4.1 million in economic impact.
- // In 2024, it will welcome five ships and 24 port visits (including three turnarounds), with an anticipated economic impact of \$5.5 million.

Turnarounds refer to the time when one set of guests disembarks, and another set comes aboard. Turnaround days are also used by cruise ships to restock their supplies. Thunder Bay has a number of turnaround opportunities due to the ability of guests to fly into Thunder Bay Airport to start their cruise. While Kingston does not currently have an air service carrier, it does have the strong potential to become a turnaround destination for future cruises.

"Cruising attracts affluent, educated, influential, and curious travellers as well as significant media attention. It helps the community develop new visitor experiences and supports existing arts, cultural, and other community amenities."

– Paul Anthony Pepe, Manager, Tourism Thunder Bay

In addition to the tremendous economic impact for the community, Thunder Bay has seen its infrastructure investment support existing cultural attractions and spur the creation of new community experiences. For instance, CCGS Alexander Henry (which long had its home in Kingston) is now permanently docked at Cruise Port Thunder Bay. The retired icebreaker, now a museum ship, is an extremely popular attraction for cruise passengers and other visitors. Also on site, a pop-up artisan market was introduced in 2023 by the Transportation Museum of Thunder Bay to welcome visitors to the port.



ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

Strict regulation for ships

Great Lakes cruise ships (and all ships entering Canadian waters) adhere to strict regulation surrounding sustainability practices, enforced by Transport Canada, the Canadian Coast Guard, and their partners at Environment and Climate Change Canada and Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Canada's marine safety system is built on more than 100 regulations and 30 laws, plus international agreements such as the International Convention of the Prevention of Pollution from Ships (MARPOL).

In 2023, Transport Canada introduced sewage and greywater discharge measures for cruise ships. It is unlawful to discharge in Great Lakes waters, and any discharge released from ships must be properly treated. Solid waste is retained on board until a port of call where it can be handled by local municipal waste providers.

Environmental footprint of smaller ships

The environmental impact of Great Lakes cruise ships is much lower than ocean-faring cruise ships. Ocean-going cruise ships can carry thousands of passengers. The world's largest cruise ship, Royal Caribbean's Wonder of the Seas, is 362 metres long, has 18 decks, and carries 6,988 passengers and 2,300 crew members. The capacity for Disney cruises ranges from 2,700 to 4,000 passengers. An average ocean-faring cruise ship uses up to 250 tons, or 80,000 gallons, of diesel fuel a day.

In comparison, the cruise ships that travel the Great Lakes have much lower passenger capacity and smaller engines, fuel usage, and emissions. Due to the lock system of the St. Lawrence Seaway, the largest cruise ship that can enter the seaway carries no more than around 400 passengers, with most carrying 200 or fewer.

The benefits of shore power

Appropriate infrastructure at a deep-water dock encourages cruise ships to both dump out at port and tap into shore power. A number of Great Lake ports offer shore power both for visiting cruise ships and wintering ships. With the installation of shore power, the City of Kingston can begin to offer electricity to cruise ships. Plugging into shore power allows the ship to turn off its auxiliary engines (which power on-board electricity, refrigeration, etc.), leading to better ambient air quality. Providing green infrastructure at the deep-water dock would tie into the City of Kingston's Climate Leadership Plan and goal to reduce community emissions to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. With the installation of shore power and other green infrastructure, Kingston would be a more sustainable and attractive port of call.

"Due to the smaller physical and environmental footprint of Great Lakes cruise ships, they retain a comparative advantage in inherent sustainability, destination stewardship and are poised to take advantage of future green energy initiatives."

- CTGL

Cruise the Great Lakes (CTGL) is a coalition of states and provinces (including Ontario), cruise lines, ports, and others working together to promote cruising on the Great Lakes. CTGL is committed to promoting environmentally conscious cruising and destination stewardship, which are critical to preserving the natural beauty of the Great Lakes, St. Lawrence River, and the region's cities. Its members have committed to a sustainability pledge comprising 19 actions in four categories – destination stewardship, air emissions and carbon reduction, wastewater, and recycling.

CTGL members support the development of green cruising infrastructure and technology to achieve the environmental initiatives they are undertaking in the pledge, such as:

- // using shore power where available and supporting shore power installation where not currently available,
- // working with suppliers to reduce materials and use more sustainable materials
- // discharging wastewater only to shore treatment facilities, where available, and continuing to not unlawfully discharge any wastewater to surface water, and
- // using solar panels for emissions-free energy where practicable.

CURRENT AND FUTURE CRUISE TRAFFIC TO KINGSTON

2023 confirmed visits to Kingston: **37 visits; 2,898 passengers**

Name	Number of visits to YGK	Number of passengers/crew	Needs tendering in
MS Hamburg	2	385/175	Yes
Canadian Empress	23	66/14	No
Kawartha Voyageur	12	45/12	No

2024 confirmed visits to Kingston (as of July 2023): **39 visits; 3,694 passengers**

Name	Number of visits to YGK	Number of passengers/crew	Needs tendering in
Ponant Le Bellot	1	184/118	Yes
Pearl Mist	2	210/70	Yes
MS Hamburg	2	385/175	Yes
Canadian Empress	22	66/14	No
Kawartha Voyageur	12	45/12	No

2025 confirmed visits to Kingston (as of July 2023)

Name	Number of visits to YGK	Number of passengers/crew	Needs tendering in
Pearl Mist	2	210/70	Yes

Potential partners

The following cruise ships/companies currently do not include Kingston on their Great Lakes itineraries, but would be able to, when Kingston has a deep-water dock:

- // Viking Polaris: 378 passengers; 256 crew
- // Viking Octantis: 378 passengers; 256 crew
- // Ponant Le Dumont D'Urville: 184 passengers; 118 crew
- // Hapag-Lloyd Hanseatic Inspiration: 230 passengers; 175 crew
- // Ritz-Carlton Evrima: 298 passengers; 246 crew
- // Ritz-Carlton Ilma: 456 passengers; 374 crew
- // Silver Sea Silver Cloude: 254 passengers; 230 crew

The following companies charter specific ships for their routes:

- // Gohagen
- // Lindblad National Geographic
- // Bruce Nierenberg & Associates
- // CroisiEurope
- // Noble Caledonia

We estimate that each charter ship used by these companies would carry about 200 passengers and at least 100 crew.

Several of these companies have expressed their interest in including Kingston as a port of call in the future, pending appropriate dock infrastructure.

American Queen ships Ocean Voyager and Ocean Navigator are currently up for sale: their new owners may wish to return them to Great Lakes tours.

CONCLUSION

Kingston has a number of strengths that make it a desirable destination for lake cruise ships, including those that currently bypass our city. These strengths include a vibrant culinary scene, diverse arts and culture offerings, and the natural beauty of the 1000 Islands.

With the addition of a deep-water dock with shore power and other infrastructure, Kingston will become a highly attractive full-service port stop for Great Lakes cruise companies. This investment will benefit sectors and individuals across the community, from food producers to artisans, museums, and accommodations.

KINGSTON

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