

9. JTP Programs: Monitoring Plan Performance and Impacts

An important part of this plan for Juneau deals with the question of managing growth, and what happens if growth exceeds physical or social capacity. Juneau has made it abundantly clear that, at some point, visitor volume or impacts from visitor activities could tip the benefits/negative impacts scale to the wrong side. Some people see that scale as tipped now, but community input in the planning process indicates that the majority is not ready to put the brakes on tourism, if impacts can be managed.

Hence, this plan relies on a “trigger mechanism” that sets off a “safety valve” chain of events, when physical or social capacities are approached or reached. The safety valve functions are NOT geared around shutting down existing tourism; rather they protect investments and jobs while developing alternative growth options that remove the impacts from the community. In some cases, regarding destination travel, it may be possible to mitigate impacts.

Juneau’s focus, in this regard, is around cruise tourism, reflecting the rapid growth over the past decade that “got ahead” of impact management. This plan, reflecting community input, focuses first on managing to reduce impacts and increase benefits, but specifically builds the safety valve discussed here.

Juneau must also look to potential capacity issues for destination travel, even though current volume and growth don’t warrant much concern. This plan, however, is assertive in the development of more destination-related product and in increasing effectiveness of marketing programs. And, the assumption is that it will be much less painful to outline growth parameters now than to impose them on a situation that has become a community issue.

Note that trigger mechanisms, by and large, measure public perception rather than hard numbers. There are good reasons for this approach. First, Juneau indicated through stakeholder interviews, public sessions, and web polling (see web poll results in the addenda) that it prefers to manage impacts and benefits (quality of life) rather than sheer numbers. Second, other parts of this plan aggressively seek to alter the volume/impact ratio, so volume ceases to be a good indicator of social capacity. Physical capacity, similarly, may be altered by infrastructure and operations changes (some prescribed in this plan and others to be developed in the comprehensive waterfront plan) so this plan does not specifically trigger the safety valve based on numbers of arriving visitors.

9.1 Cruise Safety Valve Strategy

In the last decade, growth in volume of cruise patronage outstripped the community's ability to plan for and manage impacts. The industry is projecting slower growth for the next decade and this plan prescribes aggressive impact management. Should, however, the uncertainty in the travel market place speed up growth, or Juneau not succeed in realizing effective impact management, the trigger mechanism is activated.

One potential safety valve for cruise tourism is the development of a new cruise destination off Juneau's road grid but within the same general vicinity. This is a proactive approach consistent with the recommended position of the CBJ on cruise tourism; that is, to become a partner in the cruise sector, seeking to provide a quality product to the industry while deriving needed economic benefits and ensuring that community quality of life is not compromised.

If this option were chosen, the destination would be developed (the JTP and the Assembly become the chief drivers) as a free standing cruise port (visitors don't get shuttled into Juneau) with its own set of experiences and retail offerings. With the development driven by Juneau, every effort would be made to extend business and employment opportunities to Juneau citizens first. And, management of the two destinations would focus on protecting the level of business that Juneau needs while growing the new destination as additional opportunity. The JTP and Assembly would need to work with appropriate partners, including the cruise industry, to shape this development to be attractive to the industry and its patrons. In early years, aggressive marketing will be required to create patron demand for the itineraries that include this stop. This safety valve mechanism can be executed without compromising Juneau's image with patrons or industry partners - and without the need for social conflict in Juneau.

Other options may also be explored to mitigate specific impacts or replace the above option.

9.1.1 Cruise Indicators

The JTP will carefully monitor the following indicators, on an annual basis, and trigger the safety valve (see section 9.1.3) if conditions warrant. This list may be modified over time as issues change or conditions warrant.

Condition	Indicator
Social Capacity	If fall polls indicate that 60% of Juneau residents feel that Juneau has reached or exceeded capacity in serving cruise patrons and strongly feel that the safety valve option should be activated
Social Capacity	If fall polls indicate that 60% of Juneau residents feel that cruise-related impacts outweigh benefits and strongly feel the safety valve option should be activated
Social Capacity	Public and industry discussions during the fall tourism forum indicate a consensus that capacity has been reached, will be reached in the next season, or that impact levels warrant activation of the safety valve
Physical Capacity	<p>As reported in the fall tourism forum, 10% of cruise sailings in the past season (or 15% scheduled for the next season) are unable to call on Juneau because of a lack of capacity for docking and mooring.</p> <p><i>This plan assumes that under the new partnership with the cruise industry that the industry will provide the JTP with forecasts into the future (to the extent possible) and will alert the JTP to any extraordinary changes anticipated in the future that will affect the profile of cruise tourism in Juneau.</i></p>
Resource Impacts	As indicated by reports, polls, or forum discussions, if the conclusion is that significant natural or cultural resource impacts are occurring faster than management and mitigation can handle.

9.1.2 Monitoring Cruise Indicators

Each fall, in preparation for the fall tourism forum, the JTP will meet with the cruise industry to prepare a report detailing all aspects of performance for the completed season, projections for the upcoming season, and longer term projections for Alaska cruises.

Each fall, in preparation for the fall tourism forum, the JTP will contract a poll of Juneau residents to measure capacity and impact issues based on the completed season.

The JTP will build sessions into the fall tourism forum to present industry and community perspectives on cruise capacity and performance issues. Then the JTP will facilitate a public discussion to explore those issues. That discussion will be designed to “honor and value” all points of view, and will be facilitated in a manner that is respectful to all parties.

The fall tourism forum will feature a public meeting of the JTP board of directors in which the board will decide if triggering conditions require activation of the safety valve. The board may raise the trigger issue at any other time, but the issue is formally a part of each fall tourism forum.

9.1.3 Activation

If the JTP board formally decides that triggering conditions are present, it will notify the Assembly and begin working with the Planning and Policy Committee of the Assembly on implementation of the safety valve measures.

9.2 Destination Travel Safety Valve

As Juneau builds its destination travel economy, it will share a different relationship than it has with cruise tourism. This economy will be built by Juneau, with the support (as indicated in all public input mechanisms employed in this planning process) of Juneau citizens. Marketing will be driven from Juneau and product development will focus on Juneau-based enterprises. This puts Juneau and Juneau businesses in a greater position to respond to capacity/impact issues.

Capacity and impacts are likely to be viewed in a different manner, as well. Destination travel should never generate the sheer volume that cruise tourism generates, but will generate longer stays (and hence more economic return per arrival). Visitors will disperse to natural areas in and around the borough, spending relatively little time on the streets, and then rarely in groups large enough to justify a bus.

Impacts are likely to be felt in a different manner, as small groups of hikers, kayakers, etc. may be present in places that residents like to frequent. Similarly, one might expect guided fishing and wildlife viewing outings to slip into some spaces that residents also use. These uses may detract from residents’ ability to achieve solitude.

Impacts on natural resources will also differ greatly. While cruise-related hiking tours may access the first mile of a trail system, destination visitors may be out for days. It will be important that the JTP stay in communication with wildlife and resource management agencies.

9.2.1 Destination Safety Valve

Juneau will activate two mechanisms if social or environmental capacity is determined to have been reached or breached. The first of these involves management of lodging capacity and the second involves marketing, which can both affect volume.

If the safety valve is activated, the Assembly will put a hold on issuing new permits for lodging construction or expansion, outside the downtown and airport business lodging areas. That hold will stay in place until the JTP and the Assembly determine that growth is acceptable to Juneau residents.

If the safety valve is activated, the JTP will modify marketing to take pressure off volume increases (especially relating to specific triggering mechanisms) and focus on growing price per visitor.

Further, if the safety valve is activated due to specific environmental concerns, the JTP will work with resource managers and businesses to shift pressure away from the concerned resource or species. The JTP will use marketing mechanisms to change demand, as needed, for experiences that are impacting specific species or resources.

9.2.2 Destination Indicators

The following indicators will be used to trigger safety valve actions. This list may be modified as the sector develops and impacts are identified.

Impact	Indicators
Social Impact	Polls indicate that 60% of residents feel a loss of access to solitude, key resources, or quality time in Juneau’s natural areas due to destination travel pressures - and strongly feel the safety valve should be activated
Environmental Impact	Resource management reports that destination travel is impacting resources or species and request that the safety valve be activated
Environmental Impact	Polls indicate that 60% or residents feel that destination travel is degrading the natural environment and/or threatening species to the extent they feel the safety valve should be activated
Social or environmental impact	The industry, resource managers, and the public concur during the fall forum that impacts of any kind warrant the execution of the safety valve

9.2.3 Monitoring Destination Indicators

Each fall, in preparation for the fall tourism forum, the JTP will meet with the destination travel industry to prepare a report detailing performance for the completed season and projections for the upcoming season.

Each fall, in preparation for the fall tourism forum, the JTP will meet with resource managers to prepare a report on the status of species and resources potentially impacted by destination travel.

Each fall, in preparation for the fall tourism forum, the JTP will contract a poll of Juneau residents to measure social and environmental impact issues based on the completed season.

The JTP will build sessions into the fall tourism forum to present industry and community perspectives on destination impact and performance issues. Then the JTP will facilitate a public discussion to explore those issues. That discussion will be designed to “honor and value” all points of view, and will be facilitated in a manner that is respectful to all parties.

The fall tourism forum will feature a public meeting of the JTP board of directors in which the board will decide if triggering conditions require activation of the safety valve. The board may raise the trigger issue at any other time, but the issue is formally a part of each fall tourism forum.

9.2.4 Activation

If the JTP board formally decides that triggering conditions are present, it will notify the Assembly and begin working with the Planning and Policy Committee of the Assembly on implementation of the safety valve measures.

9.3 Proactive Approach

Even if the JTP concludes that no safety valve action is required, each fall tourism forum will highlight issues that merit attention. The JTP will work proactively with the industry, appropriate public partners, and the community to shape product and operational procedures to reduce the negative impacts of both cruise and destination tourism sectors. Some modifications of best management practices will evolve from information discussed in the forum and carried by the JTP to specific operations or sectors. The JTP may decide to make specific recommendations to CBJ regarding public infrastructure, operations, permit processes, etc.

The JTP is specifically directed to assume a proactive approach to capacity and growth issues, working with industry, government, and community to manage change before it reaches indicator levels.