



Strategic Locations

HOPA Ports adds third location to its growing Ontario transportation network

IAN HAMILTON, President & CEO, HOPA Ports

It has been just over a year and a half since the creation of the Hamilton-Oshawa Port Authority. The result of a decision of Canada's previous Minister of Transport, Hon. Marc Garneau, the amalgamation of the Ontario Great Lakes ports of Hamilton and Oshawa kicked off the development of a new, regionally minded entity, now better known by its short form, HOPA Ports.

These two Ontario bulk ports in Hamilton and Oshawa are natural bookends to the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA), serving the agriculture, infrastructure and manufacturing sectors. Bringing the two ports together has already produced benefits across the region, by allowing us to accommodate a wider range of businesses looking to expand in the GTHA.

Both ports have access to an enhanced team of engineering, maintenance and security, business development and community relations. The comparatively smaller port in Oshawa has received some overdue attention to its infrastructure needs, drawing on the expertise of our in-house operations team. We've already identified more than \$20 million in necessary infrastructure improvements, to ensure

this port can continue to play its role as a critical trade gateway to the country's largest and most dynamic economic area.

As a good illustration of the benefit of these two ports' new ability to create balance across the region, a recently-opened grain terminal, operated by Sollio Agriculture at the port of Oshawa, now

allows GTHA-east farmers to choose a terminal much closer to home, saving truck trips across the city.

We're very pleased with the progress HOPA has made so far. Throughout 2020, the two ports demonstrated remarkable resilience in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic's effects on some of our key commodities. The overall tonnage was exactly on-par with the year prior, and the port of Oshawa in fact reported its best cargo year ever in 2020, achieved through enhanced diversification and terminal capacity.

We believe these early advances are just the beginning. HOPA's strategic vision is to create an integrated port network on the Great Lakes. With multiple locations strategically located in southern Ontario, we can make better use of the province's marine assets. Most recently, we've expanded our network to include a new property managed by HOPA in the Niagara Region.

The new Thorold Multimodal Hub is a 200-acre repurposed industrial site on the Welland Canal, with full marine, rail and road connections.

Niagara is extremely well-positioned for growth, and we anticipate the demand for industrial expansion in this region to be very strong in the coming years.

What's also very exciting, is that now with locations in Hamilton, Oshawa and

Niagara, we're positioned to begin accelerating our use of marine waterways to tackle one of southern Ontario's biggest challenges: its crippling road congestion.

Tonnage was exactly on-par with the year prior, and the port of Oshawa in fact reported its best cargo year ever in 2020.

The GTHA has some of the worst road congestion in North America, costing at least C\$6 billion in lost economic activity each year. One million metric tons—C\$3 billion worth of goods—are trucked through the region every day, according to the Toronto Region Board of Trade. Our

integrated port network sets the stage to provide goods movers with an alternative to clogged highways by consolidating truck traffic onto short-sea shipping alternatives, or by staging construction materials for urban development projects elsewhere in the region, and delivering those materials by water on a just-in-time basis.

To assist in developing solutions to southern Ontario's most vexing goods movement challenges, we've partnered with Transport Canada and the McMaster Institute for Transportation and Logistics to launch a new data visibility and analysis partnership. By accessing multimodal data and deploying advanced analytics, we will be able to innovate to improve supply chain efficiency and build a better transportation system in the Great Lakes region.

It is difficult to believe that not even two years has passed since the amalgamation of the ports of Hamilton and Oshawa, but already it has sparked a larger movement toward a more regional view of the Great Lakes marine sector. HOPA is thrilled to be leading this effort, building an integrated port network that will serve the region's economy for years to come. ■