

St Lawrence rings changes for Montreal

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A project of major importance to shipping and consequently ports in the region is the optimisation of navigation in the St Lawrence River from Quebec City to Montreal.

Under keel clearance technology from OMC International to determine more precise depth of the river channels, maximising the use of the channel, will increase the container loading capacity for existing panamax vessels.

Also, as of May 1, the Canadian Coast Guard authorised the passage of vessels of up to 44 metres wide on the St Lawrence navigation channel between Quebec and Montreal. Previously, width was restricted to 32.1 metres.

“Specifically, the new provisions will make it possible for all post-panamax vessels, including 6,000 teu container ships, to reach Montreal,” says Tony Boemi, Montreal’s port authority’s vice president, growth and development.

The lack of a container business at Toronto is due, in part, to the vessel size restriction imposed by the Great Lakes. In addition the St Lawrence Seaway is (typically) closed from the last week of December to the third week of March due to ice and repairs required by the 50-year-old locks.



Montreal's 18.8-hectare Viau sector is being converted to handle boxes

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