



**PORT COLBORNE**

**MEDIA RELEASE**

Port Colborne advocating for marine strategy in pre-budget submission to province

**Port Colborne, ON (Feb. 7, 2022)** – Port Colborne joined other Ontario cities and towns, and key stakeholder groups including the Chamber of Marine Commerce, in recommending that the province create an Ontario Marine Transportation Strategy and establish an Ontario Marine Secretariat to develop a policy and funding framework.

The Province of Ontario does not have a marine strategy or related funding for cities and towns with ports. Competing for limited federal funds with major city ports including Halifax, Montreal, and Toronto, municipalities like Port Colborne need to maintain port and harbour infrastructure for safety and security; to support recreational and commercial boating traffic; attract investment and tourism; promote waterfront revitalization; and help facilitate marine industrial growth. However, the capital costs to upgrade port and harbour infrastructure is significant, and smaller Ontario communities such as the City of Port Colborne do not have the financial capacity to fund these improvements on their own.

The recommended provincial program should mirror the Quebec government's "Maritime Strategy" created in June 2015, with the goal of "ensuring optimal and responsible use of maritime potential in Quebec". This program, which was established with \$3 billion over five years, provides funding for various initiatives "designed to showcase maritime transportation, tourism, and marine resources".

"As a council, we have been advocating for an Ontario Marine Strategy for the past two years," said Mayor Bill Steele.

Most recently, the City's delegation to the 2021 AMO Conference advocated for this initiative during four separate meetings with the Minister of Transportation; the Minister of Infrastructure; the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Economic Development, Job Creation and Trade; and the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Natural Resources, Conservation, and Parks.

At their meeting on Sept. 27, 2021, Port Colborne City Council passed a motion supporting a motion passed by St. Catharines' City Council asking the province to create an Ontario Marine Transportation Strategy and an Ontario Marine Secretariat.

"Having a provincial strategy and capital funding would support marine issues important to the City of Port Colborne including port rehabilitation, flood mitigation and shoreline erosion, waterfront redevelopment and the City's cruise ship initiative, and the economic, tourism, and cultural significance of the city's port as well as the importance of the industrial marine sector. Any marine strategy should also promote more partnerships and integration with rail and road transportation networks as part of a goods movement strategy," commented Mayor Bill Steele.

Economic development officers in Niagara have also been discussing this issue at their monthly meetings and Niagara Region has prepared a draft position paper that will form part of the government relations and advocacy strategy.

“Great Lakes Cruising has emerged as one of the most popular cruising destinations in the world and Port Colborne is well positioned to capitalize on this,” said Gary Long, manager of strategic initiatives. “The City of Port Colborne has embarked on a cruise ship initiative that will enhance our port waterfront as well as invite private companies to become part of this project with potential marine industry training facilities included.”

Port Colborne will see 61 cruise ship stops in 2022, compared to 12 stops the previous year. To learn more about the city’s cruise ship initiative, visit our [webpage](#).

The province launched the virtual 2022 Budget consultations on Jan. 17 and they close on Feb. 11. For more information, visit [Ontario.ca/budgetconsultations](https://ontario.ca/budgetconsultations). The 2022 Budget will be delivered by Mar. 31, 2022.

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