

# Halifax: gateway to the world

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**H**alifax is an international gateway to the world — and we want to welcome the world to our doorstep.

The Port of Halifax is Canada's third largest container port, and Halifax Stanfield International Airport is one of Canada's fastest growing airports. In addition, Halifax is a major origin and destination point in Atlantic Canada for both rail and trucking.

"With west coast North American port congestion and the explosion of the Chinese and Indian economies, Halifax has a window of opportunity to take action to immediately develop the Halifax Gateway for the economic benefit and social well-being of the regional and national economies," says Stephen Dempsey, president and CEO of the Greater Halifax Partnership.

Taking full advantage of that opportunity will require concerted effort and a shared vision. Both can be found in the Halifax Gateway Council, established in 2004 to provide a forum for transportation stakeholders in the Halifax region to work collectively on critical issues. Its specific objectives are to improve the competitiveness and efficiency of the transportation of goods and people through Halifax, and to promote awareness of our strategic value proposition.

"The Halifax Gateway Council is about seeing the bigger picture," says Karen Oldfield, chair of the council and president and CEO of the Halifax Port Authority.

A critical launch initiative of the Halifax Gateway Council was the development of a Strategic Plan with a bold new vision, and a detailed action plan to achieve it. This plan is based on exten-



Bonnie Bobryk Photography

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sive market research and industry analysis, a strategic assessment of the Halifax Gateway, and consultations with industry and government leaders at the regional, provincial, and national levels.

"The plan," notes Jim Frost, executive director of the Gateway Council, "concludes that we can indeed become the preferred eastern gateway in North America."

The city is certainly well positioned for imports and exports. It is a prime stopping point along the Great Circle Route, which offers the shortest and most effective courses for vessels en route to or from New York as well as other international destinations in-

cluding routings through the Suez Canal. Making the port even more attractive for shippers is the fact that it is the only location on Canada's East Coast that can handle fully laden post-Panamax container vessels.

Halifax also boasts a seamless intermodal connection from ship to the CN line into the heart of North America. It makes Atlantic Canada an attractive entry point to the whole continent.

The advantages offered by the Port of Halifax and CN Rail are echoed in another major transportation sector: air travel. Halifax Stanfield International Airport has more flights to more destinations than any other airport in Atlan-

tic Canada, welcoming more than 3.4 million passengers each year. With the best full-service passenger and air cargo facilities, and the widest range of prices and frequencies, Halifax Stanfield International Airport is among the busiest in the country.

"Our goal is simply stated," says Eleanor Humphries, President and CEO of the Halifax International Airport Authority, the airport's operator. "We are working to build the best airport in the world."

When all the assets are accumulated they add up to unparalleled success — and opportunity. The Halifax Gateway accounts for roughly 12,000 direct jobs,

\$477 million in direct wages, and an annual average salary of more than \$43,500 per person a year — 32 per cent higher than the Nova Scotia average.

Success, of course, is tempered by reality. And the reality is that Halifax cannot rest on its laurels. Indeed, keeping an eye on the future — and the road to growth and development is a central component of what the Halifax Gateway Council does. It also dreams of what can be. The vision set forth by the Council is simple — and attainable: To become North America's preferred eastern gateway for the economic and social benefit of Atlantic Canada.

"In order to become North America's preferred eastern gateway, the Halifax region's transportation system must offer superior connections, at better prices, and with higher service quality than other gateways," says Ms. Oldfield.

In particular, four issues must be addressed: market development; infrastructure development and funding; economic and industrial development; and government policy. The key priorities identified by the Halifax Gateway Council include growing Halifax's transport and logistics sector, obtaining federal government commitment to support the Halifax Gateway; building a common-use air cargo facility at Halifax Stanfield International Airport; and upgrading the infrastructure at the port's container terminals as well as securing Halifax's position as a cruise homeport for small to medium sized vessels.

One of Nova Scotia's fundamental strengths has always been its geography.

"We are a vital transportation hub," says Mr. Dempsey. "It's a role we play with pride — and one we intend to play on the international stage with even greater intensity."

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