

MARKET THE MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND ITS BENEFITS

In order to achieve the goal of increasing the Maritime Transportation System's (MTS) maritime trade and traffic, new shippers and cruise lines must be convinced to use the MTS. Marketing efforts can play an important role in educating prospective system users about the advantages and benefits of MTS maritime shipping. In theory, if potential users are familiar with the system and its value proposition is easily understood, they will be more likely to use it. These potential benefits include relatively low transportation costs, strong environmental performance, and improved overall resiliency of the regional transportation system.

The 2016 Regional Maritime Strategy notes that "the profile and visibility of the MTS does not match its scale, and is not equivalent to comparably-sized sectors." In response, the Strategy calls for creation of a single MTS brand, as well as marketing plans to unify MTS stakeholders.

Currently, the most visible investments in MTS marketing are often made by groups composed of multiple stakeholders over multiple ports, states, provinces, or other jurisdictions. These marketing groups include freight-oriented as well as cruise-oriented groups, however they generally do not cover the entirety of the MTS, and focus on sub-sections of the system such as the Great Lakes, or St. Lawrence River. Some of the key marketing investment efforts include:

- [**Highway H₂O**](#), an alliance of transportation stakeholders creating a unified brand and promoting the benefits of maritime transportation on the MTS.
- [**The St. Lawrence Economic Development Council**](#)(SODES), an organization created to protect and promote the economic interests of the St. Lawrence River maritime community.
- [**Cruise the Great Lakes**](#), an international partnership created to bring more cruise passengers to the Great Lakes.
- [**Cruise the St. Lawrence**](#), an organization dedicated to promoting cruise tourism at 9 ports of call on the St. Lawrence River and Gulf of St. Lawrence.

In addition to these high-level marketing efforts, many individual port authorities engage in their own marketing work in effort to attract cargo to their respective ports.

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