

The Vancouver Fraser Port Authority is working with industry stakeholders to advance the development of a dedicated common-user short sea shipping terminal and service to increase the sustainable movement of containers through the Port of Vancouver.

This work is supported by funding received from Transport Canada through the National Trade Corridors Fund.



Short sea shipping has the potential to be transformative for the Vancouver gateway

It can drive efficiencies in the way both laden and empty containers are transported and managed in Metro Vancouver while reducing the environmental and traffic impacts of containerized trade.

In 2020, the port authority, with support from Transport Canada, initiated an in-depth analysis of the viability of short sea shipping in the Vancouver gateway. The goal of this work is to understand how short sea shipping could contribute to efficiency and resilience of the local supply chain while ensuring potential impacts are avoided or mitigated.

Several benefits of short sea shipping were identified, including:

- Increasing supply chain resilience by reducing local transportation bottlenecks
- Mitigating congestion and pollution on major arterial routes through Vancouver and Delta
- Spurring local economic development opportunities
- Enabling efficient use of existing and planned marine terminal infrastructure through reducing the need for on-site container storage
- Reducing container turn times and missed sailings through the delivery of a consistent alternative transportation option
- Stabilizing local transportation costs through offering another transportation option with predictable costs for importers and exporters

Short sea shipping is both viable and cost-effective for containerized trade

Short sea shipping can be a cost-effective alternative for moving containers between deep-sea terminals and inland transload facilities. This is particularly true for importers and exporters that are transloading cargo close to a short sea shipping terminal.

Paired with transload capacity and empty container storage, a short sea shipping facility that connects deep-sea terminals to an inland truck gate and rail yard is estimated to save importers and exporters up to 10% per container in local transportation costs.

About 25% of laden import containers are currently transloaded from marine containers to rail or truck in Metro Vancouver, and about 60% of laden export containers are transloaded from rail containers to marine containers in the region. This is the equivalent of approximately 780,000 twenty-foot equivalent unit containers (TEUs).

Short sea shipping is anticipated to serve a combination of new and existing container volumes.

The Port of Vancouver Richmond Properties are well-positioned to house a common-user short sea shipping terminal

A large portion of the transload activity in the Vancouver gateway already takes place in the Port of Vancouver Richmond Properties. In fact, about 150,000 laden and empty marine containers are moved between the deep-sea terminals and this area annually.

Complementary container services, including empty container storage, container repair, and the CN Ewen rail yard, contribute to an efficiently operating container cluster in this district.

The port authority is exploring development of a short sea shipping terminal within the Richmond Properties

A portion of the Richmond Properties at the southern foot of No. 8 Road, referred to as Area V, is under consideration for a short sea shipping terminal.

The site is managed for the federal government by the port authority and presents a unique opportunity to further enhance the existing container handling cluster, generating efficiencies and resilience through a direct marine linkage to the deep-sea terminals.

To be transformative for the Vancouver gateway, the short sea shipping terminal will need to be a common-user facility, connecting both South Shore terminals and Roberts Bank to a single destination on the Fraser River. Operating criteria for the site will therefore need to be established to ensure the site is open to barges from multiple locations and service providers. This will likely include setting common prices for basic terminal handling services for all users.

In addition to work regarding a potential terminal within the Richmond Properties, the port authority is continuing its study to explore other potential options for short sea shipping within the Vancouver gateway.

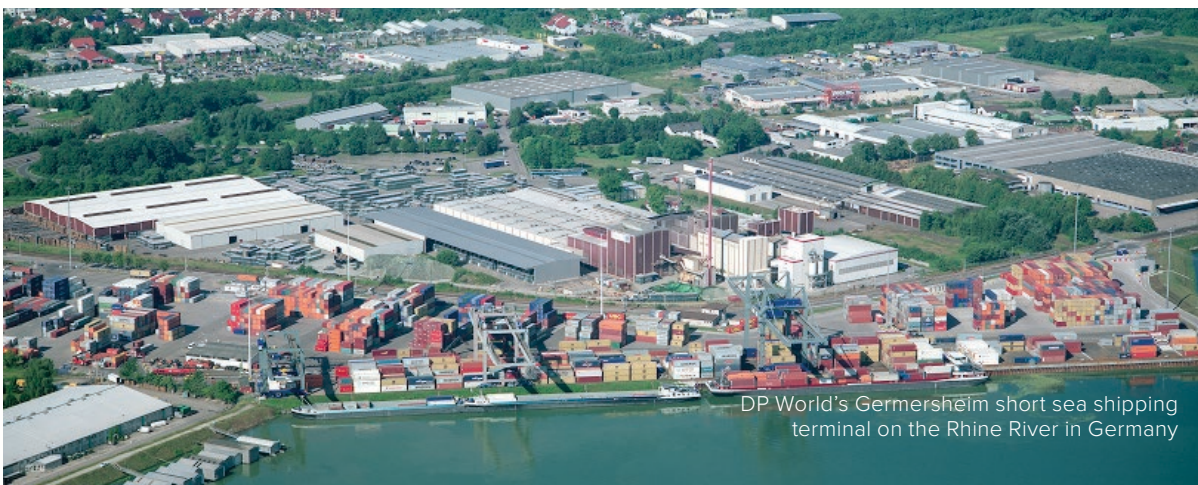
The port authority is working with DP World to develop a conceptual terminal design and operating model

DP World is advising on the design and operating model for a common-user short sea shipping terminal within the Richmond Properties. DP World was chosen based on its extensive short sea shipping experience running services and terminals both locally and abroad. DP World currently runs the only commercial container barge service in British Columbia (connecting Duke Point Nanaimo with Centerm on the South Shore of the Burrard Inlet and Fraser Surrey Docks in northwest Surrey).

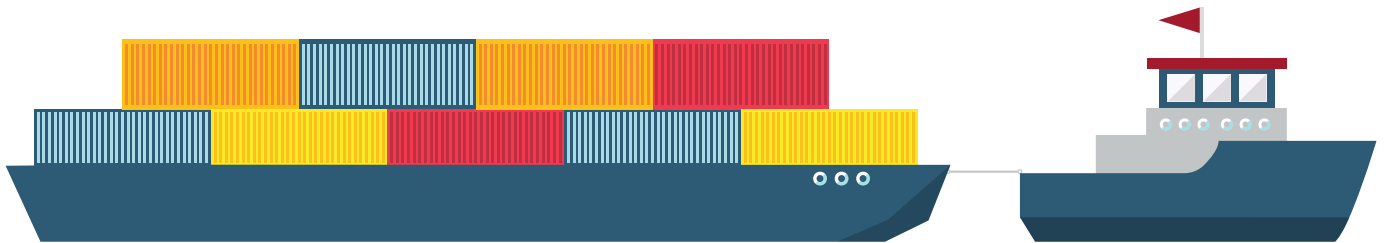
DP World also operates an extensive network of 12 short sea shipping facilities and 60 weekly barge services in Europe, with terminals in Belgium, Germany, France, Switzerland, and Austria.

A portion of the Richmond Properties is being considered for short sea shipping

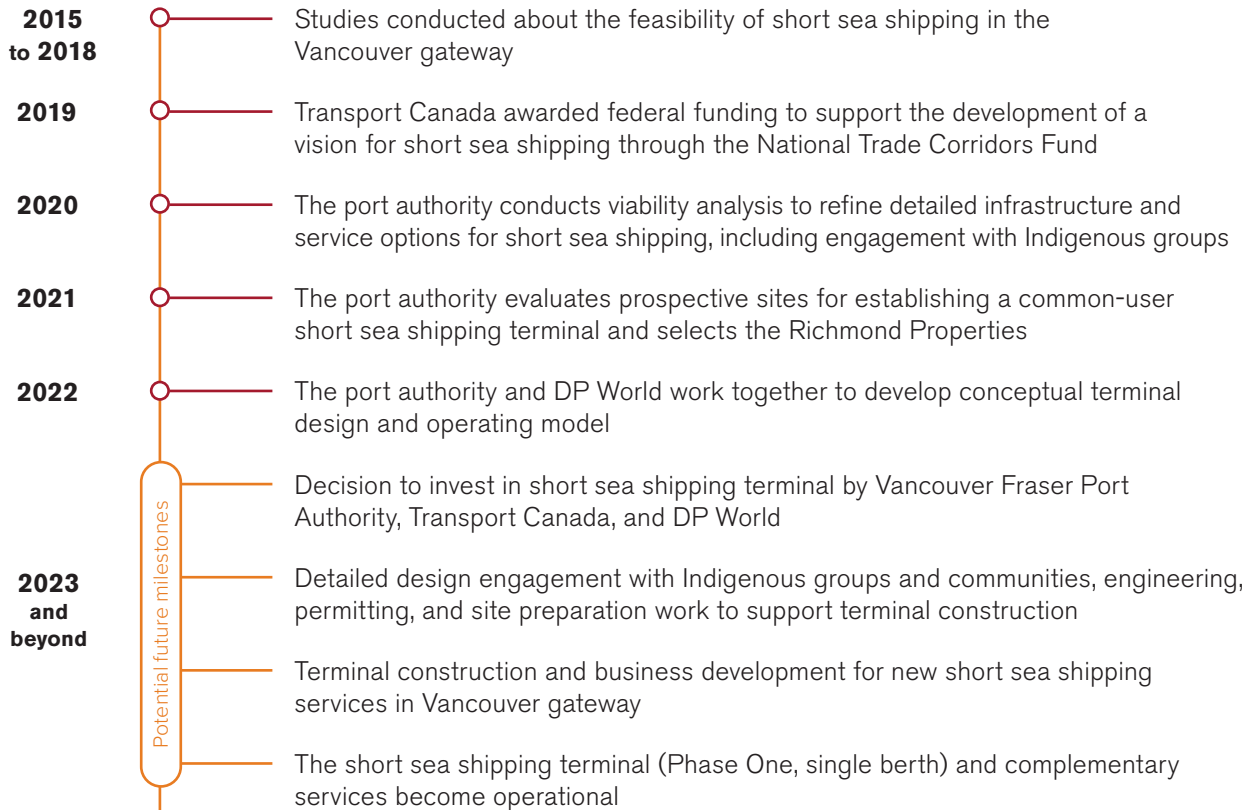
This site could accommodate up to two barge berths, container storage and staging, a truck gate, and a rail spur.



DP World's Germersheim short sea shipping terminal on the Rhine River in Germany



Project timeline and next steps



How to get involved

The port authority will continue engaging with industry, Indigenous groups, local governments and the broader transportation and logistics community throughout the development of the short sea shipping project.

We would like to extend our appreciation to all who have participated in the development of the short sea shipping vision to date. We look forward to continuing to work with you.

Based on prior industry engagement, the port authority and DP World will be reaching out directly to prospective partners for the short sea shipping project over the coming months.

If you have any questions, please email shortseashipping@portvancouver.com