

INTERVIEW OF THE MONTH



SERGE PÉLOQUIN
MAYOR
CITY OF SOREL-TRACY



A born entrepreneur, Serge Péloquin has been mayor of the city of Sorel-Tracy since November 2013. He is also president of Québec's very first 100% community-operated wind park (Parc éolien Pierre-De Saurel), president of the Régie intermunicipale de l'eau Tracy, Saint-Joseph, Saint-Roch (intermunicipal water board), and treasurer of the Centre local de développement (CLD) Pierre-De Saurel (local development centre). He also sat on the board of directors of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative from 2018 to 2019. As the mayor of a city bordering on the St. Lawrence and Richelieu rivers, Mr. Péloquin is very concerned by all issues affecting port activity. He has always been interested in water, nature, the environment and art.

Sorel-Tracy port complex

Question 1: Sorel-Tracy's history is closely tied to the St. Lawrence River. As an elected official, what is your view of maritime development at the moment?

Answer 1: Sorel-Tracy's development has always been linked to water, from the time of the fur trade to the time of shipbuilding. In fact, it's in our blood! Throughout our history, water has always been a vital economic route for carrying goods. Many companies have set up their operations here and run private ports to receive raw materials and ship various products. They include Rio Tinto Fer et Titane, QSL, Richardson, the Société des traversiers and Kildair. And, for some years now,

we have seen logistics hubs multiply. Everything is linked to performance: time is a critical factor when talking about good transport. This is why I feel that logistics hubs would do well to spread along the St. Lawrence Seaway.

There is a reason why, in recent years, we have seen new, smaller hubs spring up, allowing stevedores to quickly unload goods, which then travel by train or truck to the customer. It is to the advantage of all waterfront municipalities to use this economic lever, in an environmentally-friendly manner, of course. Companies need these tools to access new markets and to meet their clients' needs. For Sorel-Tracy, the idea of developing a port complex gives further access to Canadian, US and, even, world markets.



Question 2: How will the industrial-port zone project enable Sorel-Tracy to grow and become a key actor in Québec's maritime development?

Answer 2: To begin with, let me point out that Sorel-Tracy enjoys an enviable geographic location. It is situated where the Richelieu and St. Lawrence rivers meet, a 45-minute drive from Montréal and 20 minutes from the future Port of Montreal terminal in Contrecoeur.

Sorel-Tracy is also a gateway to the Seaway for many agricultural and agrifood operations established in Montérégie, a region that is often described as the “pantry of Québec” since it produces approximately 30% of all Québec food products. Based on this, Sorel-Tracy's port facilities will fill a need for many companies.

As for the project itself, the city has just signed a partnership agreement with QSL, a world-class Québec company, which, as of this spring, will set up port infrastructures on the former Hydro-Québec thermal power plant site in Tracy.

This plant was dismantled and the site was converted and restored in order to breathe new life into it. In Sorel-Tracy, QSL will specialize in bulk and heavy, oversized cargo. As such, the port will be complementary to the services offered by the Port of Montreal in Contrecoeur, which will specialize in containers. Adjacent to the QSL facilities in Sorel-Tracy, the city owns 7 million square feet of land that is industrially zoned and available for development. In addition

to giving the companies that set up operations there access to the Seaway, the site is located on the CN railway line and on Highway 30, thereby offering direct intermodal access.

So, the city has provided itself with a port facility that represents yet another feather in its cap in the Québec economic landscape, especially since it has local human resources that are skilled and experienced in the maritime sector. All these assets combine to fast-track the region's development.

Question 3: Sorel-Tracy is known for being proactive in research and development of innovative approaches and technologies in industrial ecology thanks to the Centre de transfert technologique en écologie industrielle, among others. How can this centre for technological transfer in industrial ecology constitute an asset in the positioning and social acceptability of this development project?

Answer 3: The Centre de transfert technologique en écologie industrielle (CTTEI) is one of the city of Sorel-Tracy's partners and is housed in our municipal buildings. This renowned applied research centre's mission is to find outlets for reusing industrial by-products to create industrial symbioses with numerous Canadian companies. In other words, one company's waste becomes another's raw materials, thanks to solutions found by the CTTEI.

The centre's proximity to the Sorel-Tracy port



complex is advantageous for the companies who set up operations there and who care about the environment. Because the project is close to the centre, it could give rise to collaboration between companies.

Already, great successes and partnerships exist in the region thanks to the CTTEI. For the city of Sorel-Tracy, the environment is definitely central to all of the municipal council's decisions. The port complex, and the accompanying industrial development, will always have to reflect this spirit.

Question 4: Given this project and these ambitions, do you have expectations of the maritime industry or requests to make to it?

Answer 4: Sorel-Tracy has always worked hand-in-hand with the maritime community. We know this industry and have experience with it. The important thing for a port city like ours is to act as a facilitator with the companies that submit innovative projects to us.

Our port complex will add transport possibilities for all exporters, as well as skilled workers and land that is available for use. Sorel-Tracy is ready to do business with the maritime industry. Our goal is to collaborate. All the more so, given our city's human dimension offering a complete range of services for families. We offer job opportunities but also an outstanding quality of life.

Maritime industry enthusiasts can enjoy nautical activities and discover our waterfront parks and

the wealth of the Lac St-Pierre Biosphere Reserve and the St. Lawrence and Richelieu rivers. If you would like to discuss your projects, contact us at mairie@ville.sorel-tracy.qc.ca or 450-780-5600, ext. 5656.