



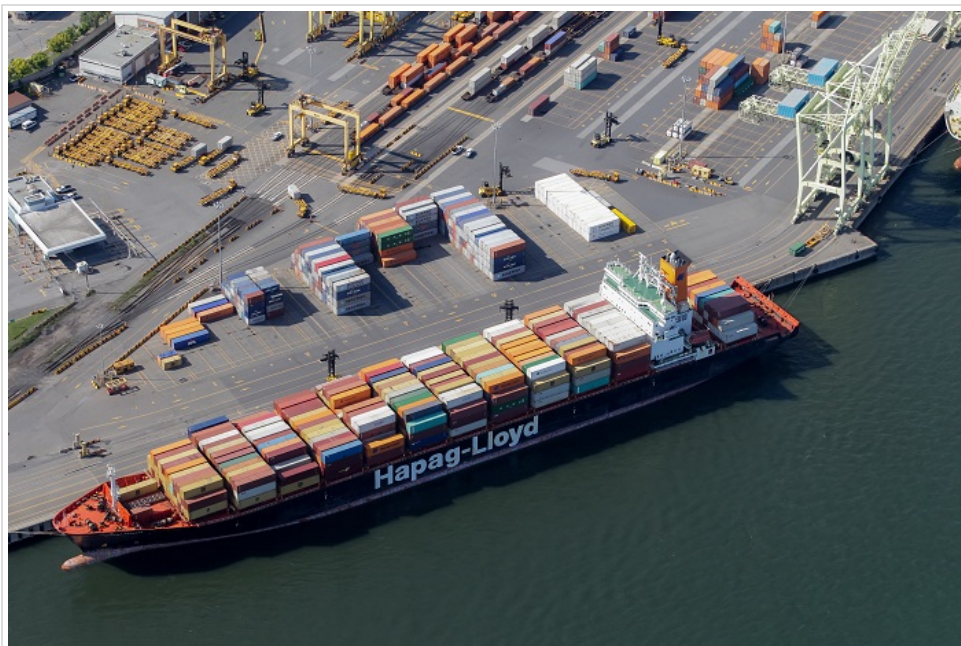
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Montreal terminals plan longer gate hours to address congestion

Hugh R. Morley, Senior Editor (</users/hugh-r-morley>) | Apr 04, 2018 5:19PM EDT[Print \(https://www.joc.com/subscribe-print?width=500&height=500&iframe=true\)](https://www.joc.com/subscribe-print?width=500&height=500&iframe=true)

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A study into the cost of extending gate hours at the Port of Montreal (above) will be presented to stakeholders on April 23, and a pilot program will be implemented by early summer, perhaps earlier. Photo credit: Shutterstock.com.

A trucking group and the operators of four terminals at the [Port of Montreal \(https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/port-montreal\)](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/port-montreal) are working on a pilot program to extend the opening hours of terminal gates in response to [persistent congestion problems at the port \(https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/persistent-congestion-port-montreal-spurs-drayage-rate-hikes_20180323.html\)](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/persistent-congestion-port-montreal-spurs-drayage-rate-hikes_20180323.html) since the start of the year.

The heads of [Termontr Montréal \(https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/port-montreal/montreal-opens-viau-container-terminal_20161121.html\)](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/port-montreal/montreal-opens-viau-container-terminal_20161121.html) and the Montreal Gateway Terminals Partnership, who each operate two of the port's four main container terminals, and the Quebec Trucking Association released a statement Tuesday citing several "challenges that are impeding the flow of our logistics chain" that have recently afflicted the port.

The "most visible" challenges, the statement said, include traffic problems caused by infrastructure and repair work, extended commuter rush hours that reduce the periods when port area traffic flows freely, and "constant growth" in freight volumes at the port. The statement also cited "delays due to the



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implementation of new technologies” and the shift to new forms of planning and operation for logistics chain partners.

A study into the cost of extending gate hours will be presented to stakeholders on April 23, and a pilot program will be implemented by early summer, perhaps earlier, the statement said.

“The pivotal moment for Greater Montreal’s supply chain leads us to intensify collaboration between all stakeholders,” the statement said. It was released by CargoM — a transportation industry cluster that focuses on cargo and logistics matters — on which executives of the four terminals are directors, as is the CEO of the Quebec Trucking Association, all of whom signed the statement.

Some truckers raised rates in response to delays

Several truckers have in recent weeks voiced their concerns at elevated waiting times at the port, [with some raising their rates to cover the cost of sitting in lines](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/persistent-congestion-port-montreal-spurs-drayage-rate-hikes_20180323.html) and others opting not to take work in the port. All four terminals have been affected by congestion at times, but truckers say the heightened levels have this year tended to be at Maisonneuve and Vieux, which are operated by Termont Montréal. The remaining two, Cast and Racine, which have seen shorter truck turn times, are owned by the Montreal Gateway Terminals Partnership. However, on Wednesday the portal created by the port authority to show turn times at each terminal showed Racine was the terminal with the heaviest traffic and waits of over an hour. The three other terminals had only light traffic, according to the portal.

Corey Darbyson, director of Transport Dsquare — a trucking company that raised its rates by C\$75 (US\$58.60) an hour for waiting time at all Montreal terminals, to be added after the first 90 minutes of waiting — welcomed the announcement outlining the proposed pilot.

“It’s a great first step,” he said. “These action items are manageable, measurable, and attainable.”

Tony Boemi, vice president of growth and development for the [Montreal Port Authority](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority), said, “The terminals have taken corrective actions to resolve the situation, and we need to allow time for these actions to work their way through the system.”

The CargoM statement said the organization last May held a workshop attended by more than 60 industry representatives on the possibility of extending terminal operating hours, at which the group opted to conduct a study into the cost of extending gate hours and setting up a pilot project. The study is being finalized and has already been presented to the “main parties” that will be affected. It will also be presented to a working group on April 23.

At that meeting, “we and the committee members will be targeting the most promising scenarios for the chain’s performance and we will define the components of a pilot project on the extension of opening hours,” the statement said.

The main cause of congestion: trade volume growth

The surge in congestion follows several years of growth at the port, Canada’s second-largest, with volume increasing by 14.1 percent in 2016 and 6.2 percent in 2017, to 1.54 million TEU, according to the Montreal Port Authority. In January, the port’s volume increased by 13 percent to 118,000 loaded and unloaded TEU, compared with the same month in 2016.

Accounts of the length of waiting times vary. Truckers say that in the last four months, since the congestion significantly worsened, three- or four-hour waits are not uncommon, and there have been sporadic moments when a pickup can take up to six hours.

The authority said at the end of March that in the previous two weeks, 60 percent of the visits had taken less than 60 minutes from the port gate — which comes some way before the five terminal gates — to

[direct-port-delivery-program_20180406.html](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/montreal-terminals-plan-longer-gate-hours-address-congestion_20180406.html))



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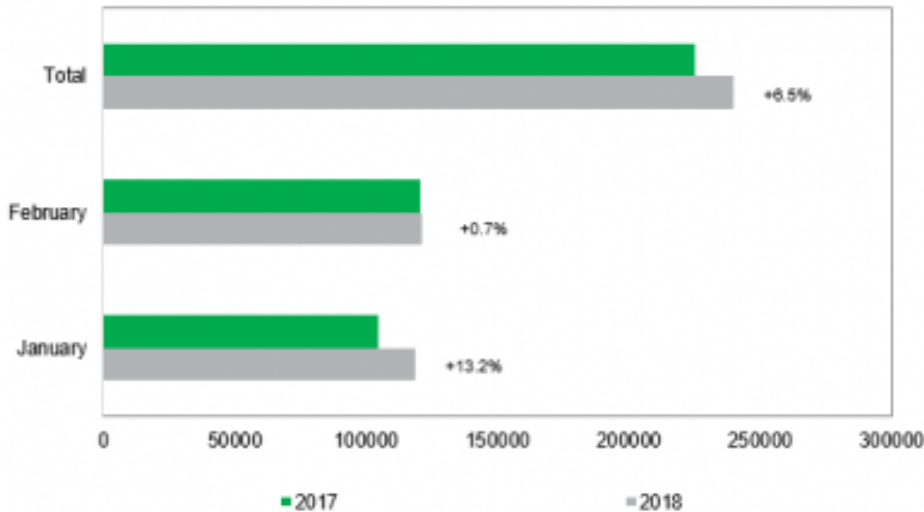
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Montreal starts 2018 with strong growth

Total TEU volume with year-over-year growth



Source: Montreal Port Authority

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depart from the terminal. Twenty-three percent of the trips took between 60 and 90 minutes, and 19 percent took more than 90 minutes. Average turn times since the start of February were lower but still higher than the 45-minute average turn time during the whole of 2017, the port said.

Aside from increased freight volumes, the Port Authority of Montreal said traffic flow has been affected by vessel bunching, as ships have gone off schedule, and insufficient rail cars sent to the port, due to severe weather. An increase in cargo from the Far East destined for the local market has also increased cargo volume leaving the port by truck, the port authority said.

The terminals, which generally close their gates around 2:30 p.m., have tried to improve the situation by extending their gates on a temporary basis, but that has generally been for too short a period and without enough warning to have an impact, truckers said.

The Canadian government on March 15 said it will [review the country's 18 port authorities](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/amid-fluidity-woes-canada-review-port-efficiencies_20180315.html) [\(/https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/amid-fluidity-woes-canada-review-port-efficiencies_20180315.html\)](https://www.joc.com/port-news/international-ports/montreal-port-authority/amid-fluidity-woes-canada-review-port-efficiencies_20180315.html) to gauge their efficiency and security after Canadian freight forwarders urged authorities to review the reliability and efficiencies of moving containerized goods amid concerns about pressure from high volume, harsh weather, and poor vessel reliability.

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