



Saint John
Board of Trade
Making It Happen For Business

September 2006

Key Priorities & Issues

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Executive Summary

Saint John is a city built on commerce.

For centuries people have travelled to the mouth of the St. John River to meet and to trade. First it was Aboriginal people, followed by the French, the British, and then, in the late 1700s the United Empire Loyalists. They established the city of Saint John in 1785. By 1819, the city boasted a prosperous merchant class, who, recognizing the power of a united voice created the St. John Chamber of Commerce, the third oldest Chamber of Commerce in Canada.

Today, the modern Saint John Board of Trade represents over 600 businesses and organizations that employ more than 30,000 people in the Greater Saint John area.

Throughout its history the Saint John Board of Trade has been a strong advocate for free trade, for regional partnerships and for the ongoing development of Greater Saint John. It was instrumental in helping to create some of Saint John's most recognizable institutions, including; the Saint John Port Authority, the Saint John Harbour Bridge Authority, Enterprise Saint John, the United Way of Greater Saint John, the Saint John Airport Authority, the University of New Brunswick Saint John and, most recently, the Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership.

It is the voice of the Saint John business community and it is the primary advocate for economic development in southwestern New Brunswick. Since 2005, it has done so as the key economic agency of the True Growth initiative. Spearheaded by the region's five mayors, the True Growth initiative is a unified approach to economic development that places its emphasis not only on the corporate sector, but also on the other pillars of the community, including post-secondary education, the arts and culture sector and social services.

The Saint John Board of Trade addresses issues that impact the Greater Saint John region's ability to attract and retain new investment, new business activities, and new employment opportunities. Of critical concern is our ability to increase our population, through both the retention of our young people and the welcoming of immigrants.

This year, the Board of Trade will aggressively support the following priorities, which we believe are essential for economic and population growth in the Greater Saint John region:

1. The development of the Saint John waterfront, including the clean-up of the Saint John Harbour;
2. Continued development of Saint John into a regional energy hub;
3. Government investment in key transportation infrastructure projects, including the twinning of Route 1 between Saint John and St. Stephen;
4. Enhanced partnerships with Enterprise Saint John, Uptown Saint John, the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation (AHSC), NBCC's Saint John campus, UNBSJ and other like-minded groups; and,
5. The advancement of the ideals outlined at the inaugural Atlantica regional conference.

Our Priorities for 2006/07:

1. Saint John Harbour Clean-up

The Saint John Board of Trade advocates:

- The federal and provincial governments provide a **written commitment** to the people of Saint John that the two levels of government will **provide full funding** to complete harbour clean-up, currently estimated at a cost of approximately \$88-million.

2. Energy Developments

The Saint John Board of Trade advocates:

- The New Brunswick government **recognize** Saint John as the **Energy Hub** of the Maritime Provinces;
- An **underground route** for the proposed Emera Brunswick Pipeline; and,
- The New Brunswick government **review permitting regulations** and policies for major energy sector proposals.

3. Transportation Infrastructure

The Saint John Board of Trade advocates:

- The New Brunswick government set a date for completion of the **twinning of Route 1** between Saint John and St. Stephen;
- An expeditious completion of the **One Mile Interchange** before 2010; and,
- The New Brunswick government complete the twinning and other improvements to Route 7, including the Welsford bypass and the addition of **moose fencing**.

4. Strategic Partnerships

The Saint John Board of Trade advocates:

- The establishment of an **Anglophone medical teaching centre** at UNBSJ and the Saint John Regional Hospital;
- An **intensified recruitment effort**, led by the New Brunswick government, **to attract doctors** to Greater Saint John;
- A **regional immigration strategy** to attract skilled immigrants to the region, particularly through our growing international student body;
- The creation of a **centre of excellence at UNBSJ** offering specialized programs of study and areas of research that are unique to this campus. Saint John could be *the* destination for the study of health sciences and health-related therapies, marine biology, aquaculture, environmental studies, and business at the undergraduate, graduate and international levels;
- The New Brunswick government provide **funding** and outreach support for the **True Growth Workplace Expansion Plan**;
- The New Brunswick government immediately **rectify NBCC Saint John's critical electrical, mechanical, structural and space problems** at its 40-year-old site; and,
- The New Brunswick government **create additional spaces in NBCC programs**, and in particular for the skilled trades.

5. Atlantica

The Saint John Board of Trade advocates:

- The advancement and **endorsement** of the Atlantica ideals.

Introduction

The Saint John Board of Trade represents over 600 businesses and organizations that employ more than 30,000 people in the Greater Saint John area. Established in 1819, the St. John Chamber of Commerce was formed when a small group of merchants joined forces, led by the Honourable William Black. In 1872 this association became The Saint John Board of Trade and has become an instrumental player in the development of the Saint John business community. Today, Saint John contributes more than one-third of the province's GDP.

The Board of Trade has been instrumental in the creation of several important organizations in the city including:

- The Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership
- The Saint John Port & Industrial Commission
- The Harbour Bridge and Throughway
- The United Way
- Enterprise Saint John
- The Saint John Airport Authority
- Saint John Campus - University of New Brunswick
- The Business Resource Centre

The Saint John Board of Trade takes a proactive approach to business development assistance by listening to members in order to find out what issues they face. We work with community partners to find solutions to ensure that our businesses continue to grow.

Our Mission Statement

*To contribute to a proactive economic environment for business in Saint John.
To provide encouragement, assistance and guidance for established enterprise, or those aspiring to become established businesses.*

Through our business offerings, programs, and membership the Saint John Board of Trade provides opportunities for members to grow themselves (through involvement and learning), to grow their business (through knowledge and connections), and assist in the economic development of our community.

True Growth

True Growth is a mayor-led community owned initiative to create a long-term vision and plan for Greater Saint John to ensure a high quality of life for the people who live here now and in the decades to come. The only "true" way to grow our region is to collaborate and achieve a balance of priorities with the economic, social, environment and cultural sectors.

The work of the Board of Trade makes the business community stronger and more effective, thereby aligning our work with the regional True Growth Agenda. Coordination, integration, and execution of population and workforce expansion strategies are crucial. The Saint John Board of Trade is working to address issues that will impact our community's ability to attract and retain new investment, new business activities, and new employment opportunities.

Within the True Growth model there are three key areas. The “Supportive Community” creates independence through the promotion of health and wellness; primary education; housing and immigration to help everyone live freely. The “Enriching Community” generates ideas and concepts that influence all aspects of society. Post-secondary institutions and the arts community can see their contributions here. The “Economic Community” helps build a sound economy. The Saint John Board of Trade, its members, and their employees are among those leading this charge.

Through information, education and awareness of the benefits of the economy and life in the Greater Saint John region, the Board of Trade is taking part in the True Growth agenda. For example, the Board of Trade is currently acting in a leadership role to: recruit and retain physicians, attract and retain UNBSJ students upon graduation, and coordinate immigration and repatriation initiatives. Also, the Board of Trade is well positioned to address the needs of our business community by lobbying at all levels of government to support and create economic development.

Our Goals

We are the voice of business in the Greater Saint John region and our goal is to be the primary steward of the True Growth agenda for economic development in the area.

Five Key Initiatives

In 2006-2007, the Board of Trade will aggressively support five key initiatives that we believe are essential for Saint John’s growth.

1. Saint John Harbour Cleanup and waterfront development;
2. The further development of Saint John’s energy sector;
3. Transportation including increased government funding for capital infrastructure projects;
4. Enhanced partnerships with Enterprise Saint John, Uptown Saint John, the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation (AHSC), NBCC’s Saint John campus, UNBSJ and other like-minded groups; and
5. The creation and advancement of Atlantica.

Harbour Cleanup & Waterfront Development

The number one priority of our waterfront development needs is the Saint John Harbour Cleanup. It is critical to our community's economic growth, environment, quality of life, and health of our residents.

Harbour Cleanup

In March 2006, Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the federal government, in conjunction with the Provincial Government and the City of Saint John, will undertake the initial steps to clean up Saint John Harbour with a total investment of \$8.5 million allocated on a cost shared basis. This investment will come from the Canada-New Brunswick Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund.

Recently, Liberal Leader Shawn Graham counter offered with his party's commitment to the Saint John Harbour Cleanup with a commitment to pay one-third of the estimated \$88-million required for this project.

The first phase of the project will see the design and construction of a new lift station at Thorne Avenue. Upon completion of the phase one and subsequent projects, sewage from about 13,000 homes in Saint John will be treated.

The Saint John Board of Trade recommends that the federal and provincial governments put in writing a commitment for the full funding of the overall \$88-million Harbour Cleanup with a specific schedule for completion of the project.

Waterfront Development

The Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership is comprised of the City of Saint John, Saint John Board of Trade, Uptown Saint John, Enterprise Saint John, the Saint John Development Corporation, and the Saint John Port Authority. This community effort is instrumental in Saint John achieving its potential as a premier waterfront in Canada.

Leading the transformation of the Inner Harbour is the Saint John Waterfront Development Partnership, operating under the direction of the Saint John Development Corporation. The Partnership is committed to rejuvenating and renewing the downtown of historic Saint John through development of the waterfront.

The Partnership has successfully provided new public access to the Saint John Waterfront (Harbour Passage). The Partnership continues to implement a long-term vision and development plan for the eastern portion of the Inner Harbour, acquisition of the Coast Guard Site, and aggressive promotion of new commercial, tourism, and residential development opportunities along the waterfront.

Successful waterfront development will require a continuing long-term commitment from the community. The Partnership will be providing recommendations to provincial and municipal government on how best to sustain and manage waterfront development initiatives on a permanent basis.

Energy

The Board of Trade advocates the recognition of Saint John as the Energy Hub of the Maritime Provinces. The positive economic impact of proposed and on-going energy projects well depicts Saint John as the main proprietor of the “economic” bubble within the Region’s True Growth agenda.

Priorities:

1. The Saint John Energy Hub

The Energy Hub means billions of dollars of investment in our region over the next decade. It can benefit all of us. The Board of Trade supports the efforts of the Atlantica Centre for Energy to promote energy opportunities in the area. Much progress has already been made in 2005 including the \$1.4-billion refurbishment of Point Lepreau Generating Station, the development of the \$100-million Irving Green Industrial Park, the 2nd International Tie Line valued at \$60-million, and the creation of Efficiency NB, New Brunswick’s new Energy Efficiency and Conservation Agency.

The Canaport LNG Terminal and Emera’s Brunswick Pipeline are viewed as foundational investments that will lead to other major investments in the region. This potential is based on the regional availability of this new source of significant volumes of natural gas, which can be used both as energy source and as feedstock for other manufacturing processes. Spin-off and complementary local industries will drive a significant portion of our region’s economy.

We need increased engagement of the Provincial government at both the political and bureaucratic level. We feel the current process needs to be more efficient and the process accelerated. The Board of Trade requests that the Province review regulations and policies for permitting important energy initiatives. With these changes existing and new companies will find the province to be more investment friendly. Investments follow investments.

2. Liquefied Natural Gas

We firmly support both an underground route for the proposed Emera LNG pipeline and the Canaport LNG terminal.

We will make an oral presentation at the National Energy Board hearings on November 6th in support of the pipeline project. The Board of Trade will also be involved in a number of media directed activities that highlight our support of the project in the upcoming months. Members of the Saint John Board of Trade and other interested individuals or groups are taking the opportunity to write Letters of Comment regarding the application to the National Energy Board.

Emera Inc. plans to construct and operate an underground pipeline 762 millimetres (30 inches) in diameter that will run 145 kilometres from Canaport LNG, Atlantic Canada’s first liquefied natural gas terminal to be constructed at Mispic point. It will connect with the Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline system at the New Brunswick/Maine border.

Emera cites economic benefits to the community that will include generation of \$3-million in port-related fees from the LNG sector, as well as 700 terminal construction jobs and 1,000 pipeline construction jobs at its peak.

The *New Brunswick Economy Rebounding in 2006: BMO Provincial Outlook Report* refers to the \$750-million Canaport terminal and \$350-million pipeline project as an important contribution to the province's economic recovery.

According to the Atlantica Centre for Energy, the pipeline and the Canaport LNG terminal together represent new private sector investment of over \$1-billion to the Saint John region. Other significant points to remember as cited by this centre include:

- Without this pipeline, the LNG terminal project will not proceed.
- The project will help to ensure a long-term, secure, and diverse supply of natural gas to our region and thus, have the effect to stimulate further economic development.
- The New Brunswick Pipeline is Emera's first significant investment in New Brunswick and they are a well-established, publicly-held company, with a solid track record of responsible management and high-quality community involvement that would be welcome to our region.

Transportation

Investment in New Brunswick infrastructure is crucial for our entire region. More than 60 per cent of New Brunswick's exports originate in Saint John and sustainable economic development is negatively impacted by the current state of infrastructure within the region.

Priorities:

1. One-Mile Highway Interchange

The issue was taken to our Board of Directors at their regular meeting on December 5, 2002 where a motion was passed to support this as our number one transportation priority for the Saint John road system. The One-Mile Highway project is also tied to our Waterfront Development priorities, as trucks must travel through the uptown core which negatively impacts the experience of residents and tourists.

The Saint John Board of Trade has reviewed the findings of the 2002 *Saint John Throughway Access and Truck Traffic Study: City of Saint John* by ADI Limited evaluating the options for improved access off the throughway to the east side of Saint John. The report and its recommendations are strongly supported by our Government Affairs Committee, Transportation Forum, and Business Development Committee.

The Provincial Government has committed to the One-Mile Interchange and we look forward to work being completed prior to 2010. The Board feels that this infrastructure investment in our community will lead to potential increased development in the industrial parks by routing traffic more directly into the industrial area of the city. It will also support the new investments to the oil refinery and potential LNG project, increase opportunities at the proposed Green Industrial Park and Bayside Drive properties, and increase savings due to reduced wear and tear on city streets by truck traffic.

2. Twinning Route 1 Highway

Route 1 is Southern New Brunswick's major link to New England markets. The improvements made on Route 9 in Maine have to be matched by improvements and twinning of New Brunswick Route 1. These issues are a matter of *urgency* for all of Southwestern New Brunswick.

The Board of Trade is now asking for the Government of New Brunswick to set a date for completion of this project.

3. Route 7 Bypass from Welsford to Nerepis

The Board of Trade has been advocating for the twinning of Route 7 since the mid-1970's. Route 7 is one of the most dangerous sections of major highway in the province. It is also the link between the province's largest city and its capital, and the main route to truck goods to and from Southern New Brunswick to Northern NB and Quebec. Completion of improvements to Route 7, such as paving the shoulders, fencing, and the Welsford bypass are also urgently needed.

The Board of Trade is now asking for the Government of New Brunswick to set a date for completion of this project.

The Board also requests that the provincial government:

- Work to collect more of the money earned through the federal fuel tax.
- Review and revise the current provincial sign policy so that signage can be developed that better promotes the locations of communities, business and tourism developments.
- Work towards standardized regulatory practices for transportation with the other provinces, and apply them consistently, to ease transportation and shipping barriers in the region.

Strategic Partnerships

The Saint John Board of Trade continues to work to enhance partnerships with Enterprise Saint John, Uptown Saint John, the Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation, NBCC's Saint John campus, UNBSJ and other like-minded groups. Through supportive and enriching communities we ensure that we have an environment beneficial to maintaining health and wellness. This diverse community includes hospitals, schools, recreation, and neighbourhood amenities.

Healthcare

Saint John is the primary referral centre for the people of this region and, in a number of tertiary services, for people throughout the province. Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation (AHSC) is a designated campus of the Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University and is affiliated with Memorial University in St. John's, Newfoundland. It also has an active Research Services Division and is the Province's centre of excellence in many provincial programs, such as the New Brunswick Heart Centre.

Priorities:

1. Medical Teaching Centre

Building an Anglophone medical teaching centre is at the top of the Board of Trade's healthcare priorities. A coalition involving the Board of Trade, Enterprise Saint John, the University of New Brunswick Saint John, and AHSC has been working to advance medical education in this area for some time.

A new medical teaching centre, located at UNB – Saint John campus, is now scheduled to take new students in September 2008. The medical program is under development and UNB may partner with the accredited medical doctorate program of Dalhousie University in Halifax, which submitted a proposal to the provincial government on June 30th.

The Board of Trade is pleased to have the government's commitment to establish the province's first four-year, Anglophone medical education program and offers our assistance in this major undertaking.

2. Doctor Recruitment & Retention

We need the Province to continue and intensify their efforts in addressing the current shortage of qualified medical professionals in New Brunswick. We ask for your support to ensure that we have adequate physicians for the Greater Saint John area.

Saint John has the largest teaching hospital in New Brunswick which welcomes over 225 undergraduate and postgraduate medical trainees to our community each year. New doctors are needed to meet the healthcare needs of the community. They are also needed to become teachers and perform research at the medical teaching centre to be built UNBSJ.

The Saint John Board of Trade, Enterprise Saint John, and Fusion have been working in partnership with AHSC to create meaningful connections to our community while they are in Saint John. These highly qualified people will be in great demand throughout North America, and we are taking the opportunity to demonstrate the advantages of working and living in Saint John while they are here.

3. Expansion & Retrofit of Atlantic Health Sciences Corporation

The Board of Trade has a long history of working with the Saint John Medical Society and the AHSC in resolving issues and continues to work together.

The Saint John Regional Hospital was opened in 1982 and has not had a major retrofit of the facility since then. In their *Presentation to the Annual General Meeting* in June, 2006, the AHSC outlined a "Master Plan" to expand the facility and to meet the needs of key clinical services. The expansion and retrofit will allow the hospital to address:

- Over-crowding
- Increasing burden of chronic and complex diseases
- Changing models of patient care / service delivery strategies
- Flexibility to adapt to technological advancements
- Support of health education partnership with UNBSJ and NBCC-SJ
- Clinical effectiveness and patient convenience in:
 - Emergency department
 - Cancer Care and Dialysis
 - Ambulatory Care
 - Diagnostic Imaging

The AHSC "Master Plan" includes an expansion of 230,000 building gross sq.ft. of new space and renovation of 200,000 department gross sq. ft. of existing space at a project cost estimate of \$192,253,000.

Education

The establishment of an LNG pipeline and terminal, as well as the refurbishment of Point Lepreau, and the creation of the Atlantica Centre for Energy firmly establish Saint John as the “Energy Hub” of the Maritime Provinces. As these projects are completed a trained workforce must be ready to fill the jobs that will be created over the next three years.

The Board of Trade actively supports our two post-secondary institutions - NBCC Saint John and UNBSJ - as they prepare students for our evolving economy. In addition, the Board will endorse a regional immigration strategy that aims to attract skilled immigrants, particularly through our growing international student body, to the region.

Priorities:

1. “True Growth” Workforce Expansion Plan

In 2004, the Saint John Board of Trade Business/Education Forum partnered with the provincial Department of Training and Employment Development and Enterprise Saint John to complete the *Saint John Workforce Survey (May 2005)* of existing businesses in the region. The Board of Trade asks that the provincial government pursue an outreach role and provide funding for the *“True Growth” Workforce Expansion Plan*.

Enterprise Saint John, along with the Saint John Board of Trade, has also developed a project to build the capacity of Saint John known as the *“True Growth” Workforce Model (2005)*. The objectives of this plan are to create a comprehensive human resources (HR) plan for Saint John; to determine and develop the skill levels of current and future employees; to develop strategic partnerships within Saint John to test and implement the best HR practices; and to turn the challenges of out-migration, adult literacy, skill shortages and demographic changes into opportunities for economic growth.

According to the *“True Growth” Workforce Model*, a comprehensive HR plan will address skill gaps and build confidence among current and prospective employers that their future workplace needs will be met. Four major groups, which are small to medium sized enterprises, will be targeted including: the energy and advanced manufacturing sector, the information communication technology sector, health sciences, and tourism.

The Board of Trade and Enterprise Saint John are now moving forward with a coordinated three-year community population and workforce expansion work plan that will provide critical infrastructure to sustain economic growth in Saint John.

Failing to address these workforce issues will severely impact “True Growth”; the economic future of our community and New Brunswick; and our ability to not only attract but retain new investment, new business activities and new employment opportunities.

2. Expansion at New Brunswick Community College Saint John

In 2000, the Saint John Board of Trade made a submission regarding *“The Need for Upgrade and Expansion at the New Brunswick Community College Saint John.”* This report identified that NBCC Saint John is experiencing serious electrical, mechanical, structural and space problems at its 40-year old main college site. These issues must be addressed for it to provide the training and upgrading for the students and employers it serves.

We believe the governance model chosen should permit the college system to address the needs of the employers and students it serves in a more focused and market-driven way.

Specifically, it should provide for:

- Flexibility to respond quickly to training needs driven by the growth sectors in the economy of Greater Saint John.
- Flexibility to source alternate targeted funding to support client needs in the Greater Saint John market.
- Committed re-investment in the physical plant of the NBCC Saint John campus to address the critical deficiencies identified in the existing infrastructure.

Investments must also be made to expand on programs delivered by New Brunswick Community Colleges. For example, programs such as the training of electricians. NBCC Saint John receives over 200 applications for the electrical program, but can only offer to 18 successful candidates.

It is our understanding that government made policy a number of years ago regarding the number of seats available for training programs. The Board of Trade asks that the provincial government revisit this policy.

3. UNBSJ – A Centre of Excellence

We would like to see the University of New Brunswick – Saint John campus become its own “Centre of Excellence,” offering specialized programs of study and areas of research that are unique to this campus. With the creation of the new Anglophone medical teaching centre and the recognition of Saint John as the “Energy Hub” of the Maritime Provinces and the “Canadian Gateway” to Atlantica our region is a natural location to set up new programs and research. Saint John could be the destination for the study of health sciences and health-related therapies, marine biology, aquaculture, environmental studies, and business at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

We want to use this capacity, together with strong links to government, the community and the private sector to provide research leadership and to help define economic, social, and cultural strategies for our region. The Board of Trade strongly urges the Province to take this opportunity to differentiate UNBSJ from other Universities. These initiatives will help to ensure the future success of the greater Saint John region and the Province as global competitors.

Atlantica

The Saint John Board of Trade embraces the ideals of Atlantica, a truly regional approach to trade and economic development. Atlantica is defined as the geographic corridor that runs from Buffalo, New York through the Northeastern United States to Atlantic Canada. Within this zone are 23 border crossings, 11 major truck gateways and seven major rail gateways.

Regional development has long been a favoured cause for the Board of Trade. The Maritimes Rights movement of the 1920's was spearheaded by the Saint John Board of Trade and eleven years ago Reform Leader Preston Manning coined the term 'Atlantica' in an address to the Board on the importance of building cross-border trade connections.

The Saint John Board of Trade and the Atlantic Provinces Chambers of Commerce (APCC) proudly presented *Reaching Atlantica - Business Without Boundaries*. This inaugural conference took place in June 2006 at the Saint John Trade and Convention Centre with over 300 delegates in attendance from across Canada and the U.S.

Reaching Atlantica provided an interactive discussion forum for the tourism, transportation and energy sectors as well as fulfilling its traditional role as a professional development venue for the Atlantic Chambers of Commerce and Boards of Trade. The goal of this conference is to find our way back to the formerly economically driven trade oriented region of Atlantica. Our goal is also to renew the positioning of the northeast as the epi-centre of trade between the NAFTA partners and the European Union Members by:

- Creating a network of like-minded business leaders from the Atlantic Provinces, southeastern Quebec and New England in the promotion of the Atlantica concept.
- Fostering partnerships between businesses in this region.
- Attending the yearly New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers Conference.
- Networking with the Eastern Maine Development Corporation to promote the Atlantic Coast Trade Corridor.
- Promoting growth of east coast port facilities as competitors in the global marketplace.
- Promoting the development of an East-West interstate highway through New England to foster corridor options for Atlantica businesses.
- Encouraging inter-provincial and international trade through the removal of barriers and harmonization of regulations.

Saint John lies at the geographic centre of Atlantica and is therefore its natural "Canadian gateway," enabled by our road, rail, air and seagoing systems. Our city's position is further strengthened by its relationship with Bangor, Maine. Organizations on both sides of the border have been teaming up, such as the Eastern Maine Development Corporation and Enterprise Saint John, to develop a trade corridor between the two cities. Saint John is also uniquely positioned as the "gateway' due to its large amount of trade and commercial activity. Our city is the largest industrial centre in New Brunswick and home to many prominent companies including the Irving Group, Moosehead Breweries, Xerox, Aliant, Cendant and Unilever.

Saint John Board of Trade

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