

TRANSPORT ACTION NEWSLETTER

Volume 35 no 3 — September 2014



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New streetcars in Toronto MIND THE GAP, PLEASE!

After years of debate and construction, the new streetcars of Toronto officially entered service few weeks ago. With all the recent technology and amenities for patrons, The Bombardier Flexicity version, tailored for the largest city in Canada will make a journey to the office better than ever. Mind the gap please!

On 31 August I was able to ride one of the first of Toronto's new Bombardier streetcars entered service on a short visit from Ottawa in their first week of operation. I used the St. Clair streetcar and the Spadina subway to go downtown, so was able to experience the new ride in comparison to the 30-year old CLRV streetcar and the new subway cars.

There were several streetcar fans waiting on the underground platform of Spadina Station at Bloor Street, including one in a wheelchair and an excited 5-year old with his mother. Although there were at least five TTC staff on the platform, none could predict when the next new streetcar would arrive. Only two are in service, so there is typically a half-hour wait.

I was fortunate as car 4403 arrived in only five minutes and I boarded quickly with the other waiting passengers, who used all four doors. As there was a driver change, the cab door had been left open and I was able to look inside at the control console with its computer screen.

In addition to the new driver, a TTC instructor boarded the car, but he remained in the front vestibule, as there is no space for a second person in the very compact enclosed cab.

We left without the wheelchair passenger, who had had some words with the instructor. I asked if there was some problem with the ramps, (the low floor is a little higher than



ONE OF THE NEWEST STREETCARS IN TORONTO

the curb-level platform), but was told that the person in the wheelchair was a fan who had already been on car 4403 and was waiting for car 4400. Apparently 4400 had been diverted onto other streets, because of a short-term obstruction on the dedicated route 510 Spadina streetcar corridor, and no one knew where it was.

This surprised me, because only the Spadina line has so far had its overhead electric supply

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adapted for the pantographs on the new cars. I was told that for the first few weeks the two new cars are operating with trolley poles, so they can go anywhere that the old cars can go. After the initial period they will start using the pantographs, except when diverted. This will mean that other routes only get new cars after their overhead lines are ungraded for pantograph operation, the next being the Bathurst and Harbourfront routes.

The new cars are 30.2 m long, double the length of the CLRV (15.2 m) and 30% longer than the ALRV (23.2 m). They have four articulation joints, so that they can follow the very sharp curves of Toronto streetcar lines, intersections, and turning loops. On the Spadina route, the only curves were in the Spadina Station tunnels, entering and leaving the loop around Connaught Laboratories, and at the terminal loop at Queens' Quay on the lakefront.

The new streetcars have some similarity to Ottawa's O-Train with which I am very familiar, which is 60% longer, but with only two articulations and three doors. Like Toronto's new subway cars and Ottawa's O-Train, the new car's interior is open from end to end, with an unobstructed view that increases the feeling of personal security. The aisles are quite narrow, so moving along a crowded streetcar is more difficult than the old streetcars. However, since passengers board at all doors, there is less need to move along the car. I was riding at 4 pm on a Friday afternoon, so experiencing rush-hour traffic, but perhaps less than usual because of the start of the Toronto International Film Festival.

Unlike most LRT vehicles, the cars are single-ended, with doors only on the right side and one driver's cab. The driver has no contact with passengers, except via an emergency intercom at each door, which the instructor demonstrated for me. An unusual feature is the curved rear bench seat with its panoramic window. Ticket stamping machines are located at the mid and rear entry doors plus a ticket vending machine at the central door. Tip-up seats at the central doors provide space for wheelchairs and off-peak for bicycles.

Two fare inspectors were on board to explain how the new "Proof of Payment" works. Every passenger had to have evidence that a fare had been paid, but in my case the old-style paper transfer from the St. Clair streetcar was sufficient. For now the inspectors are there for education rather than enforcement, but I was told that the TTC is hiring many more fare inspectors. The new system is necessary with all-door boarding and the elimination of the driver's fare-checking role. However, it was not new to me, as Ottawa has had proof of payment on articulated Transitway buses and the O-Train for years.

Some riders were complaining about the narrowness and hardness of the seats, but I measured the seat width on the new streetcar, the new subway trains and the CLRV streetcar at 17 inches in all cases. The seat cushion certainly has no softness to it. The ride was otherwise comfortable and quiet. There were audible station announcements, but oddly Spadina was pronounced "Spad-ee-nah", even though the accepted pronunciation has always been "Spad-eye-nah".

The two new cars have entered service on the Spadina line with its median segregated route, mixed with the older cars. Although one more car is ready at the Bombardier plant at Thunder Bay, it cannot be delivered and more cars cannot be completed because of an ongoing strike. Eventually 204 of the new cars are to replace all of the existing fleet of 195 CLRV and 52 articulated ALRV streetcars.

I enjoyed riding the new car, not only because of being able to compare to the older cars, the subway, and to Ottawa's O-Train, but also because the new Bombardier LRT cars for the Eglinton line will have much the same feel and features, (though double-ended and with doors on both sides), as will the Alstom LRT cars for Ottawa's Confederation line, scheduled to open as a downtown subway and suburban dedicated surface route in 2018. — *David Jeanes, past president, Transport Action Canada*

Next step in light rail in Ontario

Light rail will run in Waterloo in three years

A Groundbreaking ceremony was held on August 21 to mark the official start of construction on the first light rail line in Waterloo, Ontario.

The ceremony was attended by Mr Peter Braid, Canadian member of parliament for Kitchener-Waterloo and parliamentary secretary for infrastructure, and took place at the site of the line's operations, maintenance and storage facility on Dutton Drive, Waterloo.

The line is being constructed under a 33-year design, build, finance, operate and maintain contract, which was awarded to the GrandLinq consortium earlier this year. GrandLinq comprises Plenary Group Canada; Meridiam Infrastructure Waterloo; Aecon; Kiewit; Mass Electric Construction Canada; Keolis; STV Canada Construction and CIBC World Markets.

The 19km 16-station line will run from Conestoga Mall in Waterloo to Fairview Park Mall in Kitchener and is due to open in 2017. Services will be operated by a fleet of 14 Bombardier Flexity Freedom LRVs. Ridership is forecast to be around 27,000 passengers in the

first full year of operation, rising to 56,000 by 2031.

Ontario has committed up to \$C 300m in funding, with \$C 265m coming from the Canadian government and \$C 253m from the Region of Waterloo.



Railway in Vancouver island

Back on track for E&N service



An operating agreement to restore passenger rail service on Vancouver Island has been signed between Via Rail, the Island Corridor Foundation and Southern Railway of Vancouver Island Ltd., according to railcompany president Frank Butzelaar.

“However, Butzelaar said the agreements must still be ratified by each organization’s respective boards.

“The news comes as the strongest sign yet that rail service along the EN corridor between Courtenay and Victoria will resume again after ceasing in 2011 due to concerns with the safety of the track.

—www.nanaimodailynews.com



FAST TRACK

Did you know...

The number of Chinese cities with urban rail transit is expected to be 50 in 2020 with the total network scale of 7,000 kilometers.

—digitaljournal.com

And the number is...

133

Represents the transit trips per capita in Toronto, the highest level in Canada

—www.pembina.org

Increasing mobility in N.S.

Antigonish climb on board of rural transit



ANTIGONISH COMMUNITY TRANSIT SOCIETY BOARD MEMBERS JACK MACPHERSON, LEFT, SUSAN EATON, RIGHT, AND ALIDA CAMPBELL, SERVICE MANAGER.

Antigonish Community Transit has begun operating a wheelchair-accessible bus around the town. The service joins 16 other rural transit initiatives around Nova Scotia.

The Antigonish service is getting up and running thanks to about \$150,000 from the province, and the town and county of Antigonish. The service’s plan to have a wheelchair-accessible bus making 1 1/2-hour round trips to shopping centres, seniors homes, St. Martha’s Regional Hospital and residential areas five days a week. A round trip will cost \$3 for regular riders and \$2 for students and seniors.

The county bus will make runs to different areas each day. Rates will be on a sliding scale, based on distance. The bus will have a dial-a-ride component but will also stop at a variety of churches and community halls.—thechronicalherald.ca

JUST WATCH ME !



DEAN DEL MASTRO
Peterborough MP is working to bring GO commuter train in Peterborough, ON. Final report (which seems positive) will be released this fall.



BOB HOWE
Saskatoon transit director has recommend a lock out after almost 11 month of union negotiation. So, in this car oriented city, people who really have no choice than using transit are left out at the curb.

This was really said...

" While other industrial sectors now face some level of public scrutiny and risk assessment, the rail sector remains exempted from most controls. "

- Mayor Tyler Warman, Slave Lake, AB after six derailment in four months in his town.

Regional transit around Edmonton ?

St.Albert is flirting with the idea



A proposal for regional public transit in the Edmonton area is leading to some debate. The City of St. Albert is proposing the City of Edmonton take a preliminary look at merging systems.

St. Albert Transit (StAT) already runs a number of buses into Edmonton, but now there is talk of taking the system to the next level. A motion was recently put forward at St. Albert City Council to consider the idea of collaborating with the City of Edmonton when it comes to transit, or even potentially creating one transit authority that would serve both municipalities.

While collaboration could present an opportunity to find efficiencies within the system, there are also some challenges, like how costs and revenues would be shared.

Transit has been discussed at the Capital Region Board in the past, but the debate hasn't progressed too far. — *Globalnews.ca*

WINNIPEG SMART CARD PROGRAM DELAY UNTIL 2015

The introduction of a digital fare system for Winnipeg Transit has been delayed again. The smart card system will now likely go into service in the early spring of 2015. It will then replace all paper tickets and transfers and bus passes with digital swipe cards, where riders can load either cash or specific number of rides unto the card.



The \$18-million system was to be in place in the fall of 2013. That was pushed back to the spring of 2014 and then again to the beginning of 2015. According to transit official, the cause of the delay on problems with the digital system.

— *winnipegfreepress.com*

SHAPE MY RIDE !



Caltrain has launched a public consultation to allow passengers to shape the design of its new electric train fleet. Caltrain, which operates commuter rail services in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara, is planning to invest in a new fleet of electric-multiple units (EMU) to replace around 75 per cent of its diesel trains.

Electric trains are one component of a \$1.5 billion investment programme. By 2019, Caltrain's San Francisco-San Jose corridor will be electrified and a new Positive Train Control (PTC) system will have been implemented.

TRANSPORT ACTION is published four times a year by Transport Action Canada (formerly Transport 2000 Canada), a national federation of consumers devoted to the public interest of passenger and freight transportation.

TRANSPORT ACTION est publié quatre fois par an par Transport Action Canada, (anciennement Transport 2000 Canada), une fédération nationale d'usagers dont le but est de voir à l'avancement de l'intérêt public en matière de transport des personnes et des marchandises.

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Print edition ISSN 0227-3020
Online edition ISSN 1923-1547

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Follow us on



Coming soon...

- Transport Action BC Annual General Meeting and Regular Meeting Oct. 2, 2014 (Thursday) - 18:15 to 20:45 Hillcrest Community Centre, Terry Salmon Branch Library, 4575 Clancy Loranger Way, Vancouver, BC (Rte 33 bus EB from King Edward Stn / WB from 29th Ave Stn).

More News from Transport Action Canada

Ottawa Bus-Rail Crash - A Year Later

On 18 September 2014, five bus passengers and the bus driver lost their lives and many others were injured in a collision between an Ottawa double-decker bus and a VIA Rail train near Ottawa's Fallowfield Station. One year later, sombre memorials were held in Ottawa and buses stopped their engines for a moment of silence, to mark the anniversary.

In the same week, the Transportation Safety Board released an update on its investigation. Ruling out mechanical failures, it identified excessive bus speed approaching the crossing and possible distraction of the driver by a TV monitor showing the upper deck as factors. The final report and conclusions of the TSB are not yet completed. Steps had already been taken by the City of Ottawa to reduce bus speeds at the crossing, improve visibility, and provide advance warning signals to buses. The bus route number, 76, has also been retired,

Call of the Northland: Riding the train that nearly toppled a government

Thomas Blampied, Whitby, ON

After more than two years of work, my book about the Ontario Northland - Call of the Northland - is now available. It charts the history of the ONR, with particular emphasis on the divestment mess of the past few years. The narrative is woven through a journey I took aboard the Northlander in 2012 and also features a selection of photographs from the trip.

The book has just been published and is available at selected bookstores across Ontario and online. Information for ordering can be found at www.northland-book.net

50th Anniversary for Japan's Shinkansen

On October 1st, 1964 a revolution in passenger rail service began with Japan's New Trunk Line or Shinkansen, paralleling the historic Tokaido road from Tokyo to Nagoya, Kyoto and Osaka. The service provided unheard of speeds, frequency, reliability and safety on completely new infrastructure.

Over the years Japan's high-speed trains have evolved through several generations and the original 515.4 km network has expanded to nearly 2400 km, reaching all parts of Japan except the northern Island of Hokkaido and the central island of Shikoku. But even those islands have seen massive tunnel and bridge construction to connect to the mainland. The Seikan tunnel and Seta great bridge were built with dimensions and provision for rails to accommodate the Shinkansen in future.

The poster view of a bullet train streaking across the landscape at Shizuoka with Mount Fuji in the distance, became an iconic image of modern Japan.

Further Shinkansen extensions will open in the next two years and beyond and after many years of research into magnetic levitation technology, Japan is now set to launch its first long-distance Maglev line, again linking Tokyo to Osaka but via the Chuo or central route, to relieve the enormous capacity demands placed on the Tokaido Shinkansen.

Canada Transportation Act Review

Peter Miasek - President Transport Action Ontario

Transport Minister Lisa Raitt has launched a review of the Canada Transportation Act, one year ahead of schedule. This is a great time to make submissions on all the federal ills that we believe afflict Canada's transportation system, including

- VIA Rail – need for legislation and funding
- More money for freight railways – use American Public Private Partnership (PPP) model
- More provincial involvement in intercity passenger rail
- National Transit Policy – increasing federal involvement in urban transit
- Branch line abandonment policies
- Plans for a second Toronto airport at Pickering
- Plans for new international trade Crossings

The Transport Action Ontario board has started to discuss these items, and has set up an informal committee to prepare a submission.

Transport Action Canada has asked that Transport Action Ontario and this committee take the lead in co-ordination of responses from Transport Action associated groups across the country.

As of 25 September the CTA Review Discussion Paper is now online in HTML and PDF formats:

<http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/ctareview2014/discussion-paper.html>

The CTA secretariat requests that we circulate to members, colleagues, etc., as appropriate. They look forward to our submissions, and request that we contact them anytime if we have questions or issues we'd like to discuss further.

Canada Transportation Act Review Secretariat
350 Albert Street, Suite 330
Ottawa, ON K1A 0N5
613-998-8405

Agreement between Transport Action Canada and Le Groupe TRAQ

Harry Gow and Louis François Garceau

Project: Public Education on Rail Transportation

The Boards of Directors of Transport Action Canada and Le Groupe TRAQ (Transport sur rail au Québec) have reached an agreement in principle on a public awareness and educational project pertaining to rail transportation, including current technologies, main issues and safety, as well as its heritage.

(TRAQ has been an associated regional member of Transport Action Canada for many years and this agreement falls within Transport Action's educational mandate, with a focus on Quebec and on French language programs.)

The Board of Directors of **Le Groupe TRAQ** has also voted to present to the Board of Directors of **Transport Action Canada** an educational and informative project which, with the assistance of retired and active railroaders, railway managers and other decision makers in railway transportation, will have the following objectives:

- Transmit and explain to the general public information and knowledge related to the various aspects of rail transportation such as operations, marketing and safety, as well as social and economic issues associated with the availability of rail services.
- Offer a forum where socio-economic actors and carriers can discuss various issues of rail transportation, taking into account the respective concerns of shippers, regions and public authorities.
- Heighten public awareness, especially among youths, of the dangers associated with grade crossings and intrusions on railway property, and promote safe behaviours in that matter.
- Heighten public awareness of railway heritage.

TRAQ brings the following assets to the project:

1. The housing, cataloguing and availability of its archives in Charny, QC.
2. “*La revue TRAQ*”, the only French language railway magazine in North America, which brings knowledge in railway transportation to francophone readers who otherwise should rely only on information conveyed by the general press or by English language specialised rail publications.
3. The organisation of annual railway symposiums on current subjects, including a significant part on safety, for the benefit all concerned by railway transportation.
4. The availability of many local and regional volunteers
5. The organisation of railway exhibitions for specialists and enthusiasts
6. The education of youth through affiliation with Operation Lifesaver.

James T. Lyon, Q.C. (1934-2014)

Harry Gow, president, Transport Action Canada

James T. Lyon, who died of cancer on 15 July in Ottawa at age 80, became involved with Transport Action, (formerly Transport 2000), through his work with the Air Passenger Safety Group (APSG). He had trained as a naval pilot in the U.K. and had developed a love of flying before he began his legal training in Scotland and at McGill University in Montreal, and began a successful career in law in Canada.

I am really saddened by the loss of this most valued former APSG activist, whom I knew to have cancer for some time. Unfortunately, and I regret this sorely, I never made time to try to visit him and now it is too late. I shall remember him for his RAF anecdotes, his great sense of humour, his treasure trove of Scots culture and expressions and his dedication to passenger safety.

He was a fine British gentleman to whom Transport Action (Transport 2000) owes a debt of gratitude for stopping an assault by the Government of Canada who wanted to make trouble for us for not registering as lobbyists. He patiently listened to the whole case laid out by a public servant to this end and then replied "My dear lady, I nothing would please me more than to be abler to reply positively to your demand that we register as lobbyists, but I regret to inform you that we cannot do so as it would be illegal. The law prevents Charities from doing any such thing, and Transport 2000 Canada is a registered charity". And that was the end of it.

Rest In Peace, James Traill Lyon, Q.C.

VIA Rail Resumes Service to Churchill after 1.5 Month Interruption

VIA Rail service to Churchill, MB resumed after a derailment stopped passenger trains to the northern community for 1.5 months. Service along the 270-kilometer stretch of track between Gillam and Churchill shut down on June 2nd last after several freight cars derailed.

Freight service eventually resumed but VIA Rail service had been off since the accident. The rail crosses sub-arctic terrain and is frequently hit by disruption. Omnitrax Canada, which owns the line, has since cancelled plans to operate test runs of crude oil along the line, in response to negative reactions from First Nations and other residents along the line.

A letter from Transport Action Prairies' Peter Lacey to VIA to press for restoration of service went unanswered for some time.

From GlobalNews.ca 18 July 2014 via Branchline magazine.

Ottawa Citizen - More funds needed for VIA Rail

Via Rail says track repairs in New Brunswick were the main reason behind a sharp jump in costs last year for providing alternative transportation – such as buses, and taxis – for its stranded passengers.

The revelation came as critics said the Crown corporation needs more funding and more independence. The Citizen revealed a few days earlier that Via Rail spent \$1.7 million last year on buses and taxis for passengers it couldn't transport, up from \$1.3 million in both previous years.

A VIA Rail spokesman said on Tuesday that \$300,000 of the \$400,000 increase was spent on alternative transportation between New Brunswick and Quebec for the nine months that tracks were being upgraded. The Crown corporation relies almost entirely on tracks owned by CN Rail.

“There’s a question of investment, but there’s also a need to put more importance on passenger rail,” said MP NDP Hoang Mai. The Official Opposition’s transportation critic was among a handful of MPs stuck on a train delayed outside Ottawa for an hour Monday – perhaps underscoring his point.

According to its 2013 annual report, Via Rail’s federal funding has fallen from \$530 million in 2010 to \$398 million last year. Via has also undertaken service cuts, especially to parts of the Windsor-Quebec City corridor outside the high-volume Toronto-Montreal routes.

The agency netted 744 complaints in 2013 on “train performance,” which includes delays. But that was a 12-per-cent drop from 2012. “The vast majority of delays are caused by elements outside VIA’s direct control, mainly other freight railways,” said VIA Rail spokesman Malcolm Andrews.

The agency’s figures show that in 2013, 72 per cent of delays were caused by freight issues such as breakdowns and congestion. Via maintenance issues accounted for 18 per cent of delays, while incidents such as weather and trespassers made up 10 per cent.

Ottawa South Liberal MP and transportation critic David McGuinty said while he thinks more funding is needed, VIA Rail's role needs to be examined alongside industrial trains and passenger air travel. "There's no adult conversation about a national transportation strategy," he said.

At a June transportation committee meeting, Mai moved to bring VIA's officials to a televised meeting to talk about funding woes, but the Conservatives quashed the move. "I think there's a lot of questions that we have," he said. "In terms of how the commuters see Via Rail, if you reduce the service, obviously you won't increase the number of passengers."

David Jeanes, an engineer who helped found the advocacy group Transport Action Canada in 1976, says that beyond funding, the corporation needs more authority. (Jeanes has been a member of Transport Action, formerly Transport 2000, and served as president for 12 years). "There's been kind of a minimum sort of barely sustainable level of funding to VIA," he said, noting that the cuts precede the Conservatives' decade-long administration. "And VIA has been kept on a very tight leash."

Jeanes said VIA officials regularly scramble to make arrangements during service interruptions, many of which are caused by CN Rail's freight trains. For example, when a CN freight train derailed in Belleville on July 10, VIA, which uses the same rail line, could only find buses for some passengers, leaving scores stranded. Another issue with a CN train left a VIA Rail train two hours outside Saskatoon stranded for 24 hours last March. Jeanes believes CN Rail doesn't pay compensation to VIA when its freight service causes delays. CN Rail refused to comment, with spokesman Mark Hallman saying in an email the agreement between both corporations is "confidential and cannot be disclosed publicly."

Jeanes' group is pushing for Canada to emulate the 1970 U.S. Rail Passenger Service Act, which guarantees compensation for Amtrak by companies whose rail lines are clogged by freight trains. The act also gives Amtrak a separate budget, which differs from Canada's approach: having an underfunded Transport Canada decide how much funding VIA Rail gets.

"For many years VIA has not been buying any new passenger equipment; in every other country there's a program to buy new equipment to maintain passenger trains," said Jeanes, describing VIA Rail as a fleet of 30-year-old trains riding 60-year-old infrastructure with little budget for spare parts.

The NDP introduced a private member's bill similar to the U.S. approach in March, when former MP Olivia Chow tabled the VIA Rail Canada Act. The bill, which MP Philip Toone

reintroduced in June, would carve out special powers and rights for VIA, such as giving it preference over freight on the lines it uses.

"The government's not going in the right direction," said Mai, whose train resumed service when investigators cleared the sole available track.

Ottawa Citizen, Dylan Robertson, September 22, 2014

Willful Blindness? Regulatory failures behind the Lac-Mégantic disaster

**Bruce Campbell, Executive Director,
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives**

(Excerpts from a thoroughly researched paper released on 18 August 2014, the day before the Transportation Safety Board report on the catastrophic derailment and fire was released).

The purpose of this paper is to document how Canada's federal regulatory regime failed – directly and indirectly – to prevent corporate negligence, for which the citizens of Lac-Mégantic paid a terrible price. ... The following are seven areas in which Canada's federal regulatory system failed Lac-Mégantic.

1. Transport Canada's railway operating rules are at times vague and inadequately enforced, giving companies too much latitude and granting too many exemptions.
2. Transport Canada granted permission to MMA – a company with an appallingly poor safety record – to operate trains carrying massive amounts of dangerous goods (crude oil) with a one-person crew, which represented an exemption from the rules.
3. Transport Canada allowed crude oil, a dangerous good, to be transported in unsuitable tank cars.
4. Transport Canada disregarded concerns about the explosiveness of Bakken crude bound for Canada, had lax testing requirements, and collected insufficient data about the transportation of dangerous goods
5. Transport Canada's Safety Management Systems were defective – lacking sufficient oversight and enforcement.
6. Transport Canada's risk assessment processes and protocols were flawed
7. Transport Canada was complacent in light of the oil-by-rail boom, allocating insufficient regulatory resources to cope with the massive surge.

Lac-Mégantic is the most devastating Canadian rail disaster in a century. How is it possible that it is deemed not to warrant an external, fully independent inquiry? ... Canada owes it to the victims of Lac-Mégantic not to forget.

Donation Form (overleaf)

Transport Action Canada depends on donations and membership fees to support our programs, advocacy and publications. As a registered charity, (119268571 RR0001), we can issue official receipts for Canadian tax purposes, except Ontario region amounts.

We welcome new members and gifts of membership, for both of which there is a one-year introductory membership rate of \$20.00. **Regular membership fees:** Individual \$35, Senior \$30, Student \$25, Family \$50, Income Limited \$20, Library \$50, Non-profit \$75.

Memberships and donations may be paid by cheque, VISA or MasterCard, using the enclosed reply envelope or by sending to Transport Action Canada, PO Box 858, Station B, Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9 or via www.PayPal.com to pay@transport-action.ca.

You may designate part of a donation for one or more specific funds, such as: McCullum Research Fund (Ontario), Air Passenger Safety (APSG), TRAQ (Quebec), Friends of the O-Train (Ottawa LRT), National Dream Renewed, or your region (AT, ON, PR, BC).

Transport Action has changed the Scene

Harry Gow, President, Transport Action Canada

I recently heard a comment from a critical colleague "Transport Action Canada doesn't do advocacy". My response was that it does, but that the way we advocate has changed.

Over a year ago, dissatisfied that we were no longer busy with our one-time activism, the national Board set out on an entirely new venture, the National Dream Renewed (NDR) campaign.

We previously had a propensity for the classic methods, with public positions taken with politicians, the media, discrete non-partisan lobbying and all the old ways of influencing policy formation, or at least staying the perverse effects of existing policy on public transport. Faced with the environment in Ottawa where the views of public interest associations now count for little, and tired from years of struggle, Transport Action Canada was becoming invisible. Even the newsletter was "on holiday" for a year!

The Board decided to try a new approach. A national campaign would be undertaken at the grass roots level, with the help of municipalities, some media and communities in general. Concurrently, VIA Rail Canada was announcing cuts to its services even in the Québec-Windsor corridor in particular in south-western Ontario; Ontario Northland cancelled the Toronto-Cochrane "Northlander" train, and segments of line carrying passenger trains were under threat in Québec and Atlantic Canada. Energetic fund-raising by Elizabeth Hill to fund the campaign was successful, so there was hope we could afford to fight the cuts.

Greg Gormick, an eminent railway writer, was hired on a contract to hold Town Hall meetings in concert with municipal leaders across south-western Ontario and the Maritimes. By all accounts, these were a huge success, and halls from Sarnia to Halifax were filled with citizens there to hear Greg's structured analysis Canadian passenger rail and proposals for reform of the mandate, mission and structure of VIA Rail Canada.

A tidal wave had started. Faced with the imminent loss of part of the former Intercolonial mainline from Campbellton, N B to Halifax, municipalities on the New Brunswick portion of the line hired Greg to prepare a study and proposal for the future of the line. A coalition of citizens and municipalities fought for and got the 10 million dollars needed to rehab the central part of the line, saving it for the Ocean passenger service.

To continue the campaign, the undersigned picked up where Greg left off, offering the same structured presentation that had been a success in the East. We took the campaign from New Brunswick and the Gaspésie to the Algoma District of Ontario and helped with the campaign to save the Algoma Central passenger train from defunding and death. The Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains and others obtained a one-year stay of execution, and work to ensure the future of the service is under way with a real chance of success. The community tidal wave had swamped the Transport Canada bureaucrats who had hoped that the two services would drown from neglect.

Finally, National Dream Renewed Town Hall meetings were held in Victoria, Vancouver, Melville SK and Winnipeg. The most successful was the Victoria meeting, with Island Corridor Foundation's Judith Sayers and Green Party leader Elizabeth May announced to the hundred-plus rail supporters present the preliminary agreement (ICF - VIA Rail) in principle for the restoration of Dayliner service on Vancouver Island. Thanks are due to all the "regional" Transport Action affiliates that did the organising locally.

We aren't done yet. More work in support of the communities in all parts of the country to get back meaningful passenger train service in certainly needed. A train twice a week is only a token "service" and the needs of areas like South-Western Ontario remain underserved. Even motor coach services are under threat in some areas, and we have made contributions to the debate on that subject in Québec and the Maritimes.

Transport Action Canada itself will need resources to continue the work so well started, with a supply of volunteers not always sufficient cover all our needs, and postal rates and other charges going through the roof. The National Dream Renewed campaign got most of our donations over the last year, so now we need to beef up capacity of the organisation itself.

I ask our members and subscribers to give generously to Transport Action Canada to continue its work. We have carried the message of sustainable transport to communities "from Sea to Shining Sea" and hope to be able to continue to be present to assist them in getting satisfaction of their public transportation needs. Please fill out the form below and place your contribution in the enclosed return envelope with a stamp put it in the mail today.

Please accept our thanks in advance for your help.

Harry Gow

(Please tear off or copy this form and return with your donation, or donate via the Internet)

Donation (specify purpose if desired) \$ _____	- National Dream Renewed _____ %	Name: _____
	- McCullum Ontario Research _____ %	
Gift membership (1-year introductory) \$20	- TRAQ (Québec) _____ %	Address: _____
Please provide name and mailing address	- Air Passenger Safety (APSG) _____ %	_____
	- O-Train Light Rail Project (Ottawa) _____ %	_____
Total of above amounts: \$ _____ cheque? <input type="checkbox"/> or	- Activities in _____ region _____ %	_____
	- General activities of Transport Action _____ %	_____
VISA/MasterCard _____ exp. _____	Additional Comments: _____	City, Province-State, Post-Zip code, Country _____
or www.PayPal.ca to pay@transport-action.ca	_____	_____
Signature _____ Tax receipt? <input type="checkbox"/>	To: Box 858, Station B, Ottawa ON K1P 5P9	Phone, Fax, Email _____