

TRANSPORT ACTION NEWSLETTER

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IN THIS ISSUE

EASTERN SHORES



Christmas gift from VIA
Page 2

QUEBEC



Rusty bridge needs paint!
Page 3

CANADA



The Millenians are coming...
Page 4

Cape Breton Rail in jeopardy ALL ABOARD FOR THE FUTURE ?

Another piece of Canada's national rail network could soon disappear. The operator of the line that spans Cape Breton Island wants to abandon service and tear up the tracks. But it won't happen without a fight, as strong local opposition is building momentum.

Transport Action Atlantic will be an intervenor when the Nova Scotia Utilities and Review Board holds public hearings concerning the rail line between the Strait of Canso and the Sydney area. The 98 miles of former CN track, part of the Cape Breton and Central Nova Scotia Railway, is now owned by US-based Genesee & Wyoming, who want to abandon service and remove the rails. Since the closure of the Sydney steel mill and the coal mines that were once the area's economic lifeblood, plus the diversion of intermodal traffic to highway, rail traffic has declined to only about 500 carloads per year — a small fraction of what G&W claims is needed to turn a profit.

The Province of Nova Scotia had been subsidizing the line to the tune of \$2 million per year for the past decade, but the company says it is no longer interested — subsidy or not. They simply want out, and have informed customers that massive rate increases would be forthcoming on expiry of the current provincial funding arrangement. The board has no

authority to order continued operation of an uneconomic line, but the provincial legislature has just unanimously approved amendments to the Railway Act that will make it much more difficult for the company to remove the track.

The hearing in December will have little effect on G&W's intention to withdraw service, but



CBNS NEAR SHUNACADIE, NS.

it will afford numerous intervenors, including customers, business groups and municipal leaders, a high-profile opportunity to make their voices heard and to offer solutions. Transport Action Atlantic's appearance will be spearheaded by Don MacLeod and Ashley Morton, who will emphasize the importance of the line to hopes for new economic expansion in the area once known as Industrial Cape Breton. The association has already written to Transportation Minister Geoff MacLellan on two occasions regarding the issue.

Continue on page 2

VIA and the holiday season

Extra service for the Maritimes



VIA Rail is under new management, and the people now in charge seem to be making a serious effort to reverse the death spiral that enveloped Atlantic Canada's sole surviving passenger train during the watch of the former CEO. The upcoming holiday travel season will see three additional scheduled departures in each direction between December 17 and January 4 – which means there will be four round trips between Montreal and Halifax per week during the period. Not only that, but VIA has also initiated a print and radio advertising campaign promoting the extra trips and the Ocean itself – something it hasn't done for a decade or more.

The three additional holiday round trips will each provide an extra 186 coach seats and 89 sleeper berths.

Transport Action Atlantic is viewing the announcement as a positive development and a sign that VIA is beginning to pay attention to what Maritimers have been telling them about passenger rail needs east of Quebec City.

—Ted Bartlett

Calgary transit

Full accessibility on bus routes by 2015

Calgary city buses will be stair-free come 2015, a move being welcomed by disabled residents who rely on the big rides to get around.

Calgary Transit expects to have a 100 per cent accessible fleet by the end of 2014. A feat accomplished by retiring what's left of their 36 step-buses. "All our buses... will be technically all low-floor buses," said Russell Davies, manager of transit fleet. "You don't have any of those big steps going up into the bus... it does help with accessibility for wheelchair-based passengers and passengers with mobility issues."

There are only six buses still on the streets, and Davies expects the full transformation to be complete by late November, early December.

—metronews.ca



From page 1

TAA strongly believes that conditions on Nova Scotia's overburdened and often-hazardous highway system could be improved considerably if the trend toward moving freight traffic from rail to trucking could be reversed. For example, significant volumes of intermodal freight destined for Cape Breton and the Newfoundland ferry are now offloaded from rail at Moncton, and road hauled unnecessarily for nearly 500 kilometres. TAA is suggesting the provincial government could reap substantial benefit from a modest investment in rail infrastructure, and by leading an initiative to promote intermodal and carload traffic on the CB&CNS.

When CN originally sold the track to shortline operator RailTex

in 1993, the CEO of the then Crown corporation promised the Nova Scotia government in writing that it would ensure continuing rail service should the shortline operation fail. The Government of Canada subsequently privatized CN, but TAA maintains that Ottawa still has a moral obligation to the Province to assist in keeping the line operational, based on that 1993 commitment.

Meanwhile, in a late development just before press time, the Halifax Chronicle-Herald reported that a group of local investors was exploring the possibility of taking over operation of the line.

— Ted Bartlett, Transport Action Atlantic

Quebec bridge

Bill Gates is asked to paint the bridge !

Bill Gates, the biggest investor in Canadian National Railway Co. (CNR), received an appeal from two Quebec mayors to prod the carrier into repainting a signature bridge in the provincial capital.

Quebec City Mayor Regis Labeaume and a counterpart from nearby Levis wrote to Gates, the Microsoft Corp. co-founder, to seek help in getting Canada's largest railroad to spruce up its Quebec City Bridge, which they say is "plagued by rust."

Canadian National has "refused to finish the paint work it abandoned in 2005, and is categorically opposed to making improvements it deems merely esthetic," Labeaume and Levis Mayor Gilles Lehouillier wrote in a letter sent to Gates.



Gates controls about 13 percent of Montreal-based Canadian National through his Cascade Investment LLC and the Gates Foundation, data compiled by Bloomberg show. Those holdings were valued at about C\$8.4 billion, based on yesterday's closing price.

Canada's federal government had sought to compel the railroad to pay for painting the bridge, an effort rebuffed by a judge

last month. In an Oct. 22 decision, a Quebec Superior Court judge ruled that Canadian National had no such obligation because it had already met a 10-year, C\$36 million investment commitment under a 1997 agreement with the governments of Quebec and Canada.

—www.businessweek.com

Gaspé line under new management

The Gaspé Railway Company has appointed Jacques Coté, an experienced railway executive, as CEO for a term of six months in order to get its house in order and give it more credibility with the Québec Government. The railway is in need of repair and has had a number of setbacks, some self-inflicted. Transports Québec has let it be known that the 15 million dollars needed to repair the western end of the line to a new cement works in Port Daniel would only be available if the Gaspé Railway reforms itself.

Mr. Coté has impressive credentials, having run CPR's Eastern Lines and the Delaware and Hudson Railway. He is a former Board member of Transport 2000 Québec and holds a Guy Chartrand Prize for making his mark in the transport industry.

The "suspended" former Chaleur passenger train can only be returned to the Gaspé line if VIA is reassured as to its track condition and overall safety.

FAST TRACK

Did you know...

On October 1st, 1964 Japan marked the renaissance of rail by introducing 220 km/hr high speed train between Tokyo and Osaka.

—nippon.com



And the number is...

10

That's how many new rail safety paper-works auditors Transport Canada will hire after public calls for more hands-on inspectors.

THE ELEVATOR

WINNIPEG TRANSIT
Electric buses are coming into the streets. They are the first standard buses to run on regular schedule and capable of a full recharge in 10 minutes.



UNION PEARSON EXPRESS
Schedule for service in spring 2015, the Union Pearson express is already making the headlines. Even if fare structure will be issued in late december, critics think it will be in the range of 20-30\$ for a one way trip. Welcome to Canada !



" The feature that adds the most value to the home is nearness to rapid transit "

- Melanie Reuter, director of research at the Real Estate Investment Network

Texting, driving and travel habits

Millennials will change the way we move around



An Associated Press article on a survey (sponsored by AT & T) of drivers who text daily reports that 98 per cent of respondents "said they were aware of the dangers of texting behind the wheel. Nonetheless three-quarters of them admitted to texting while driving ...". Over 25 % said they have sent texts while driving.

Another way in which texting at the wheel is reduced is found in a US Public Interest Research Group (PIRG) report : **Millennials in Motion - Changing Travel Habits of Young Americans and the Implications for Public Policy**, published in October 2014. Thanks to Tony Turritin, Transport Action Canada's national Secretary, for bringing this study to our attention.

The Executive summary of the PIRG report says:

"Academic research, survey results and government data point to a multitude of factors at play in the recent decline in driving among young people: socioeconomic shifts, changes in consumer preferences, technological changes, efforts by state governments and colleges to limit youth driving, and more".

"Millennials (those born between 1983 and 2000) are the nation's largest generation, making their transportation needs particularly important. ...".

"Millennials are less car-focused than older Americans and previous generations of young people, and their transportation behaviors continue to change

in ways that reduce driving".

"Between 2001 and 2009, the average number of miles driven by 16 to 34 year-olds dropped by 23 percent, ...Young Americans drive less than older Americans and use public transportation more, and often use multiple modes of travel during a typical day or week. In recent years, young people appear to have continued to shift away from driving. Young people aged 20 to 30 are less likely to move from central cities to suburbs than a decade ago".

Some of the other points made in the PIRG study:

- Driver's licensing among young people has continued to decline. The percentage of high school seniors with driver's licenses declined from 85 percent to 73 percent between 1996 and 2010, according to the AAA Foundation for Highway Safety, with federal data suggesting that the decline has continued since 2010;
- Young people are not the only Americans who are driving less. The number of miles driven by the average American has declined nearly continuously since 2004.

The study enumerates a number of "other steps that discourage driving", including college and university efforts to reduce car dependency among full-time students (e.g Dalhousie, Universities of Sherbrooke, of Ottawa and others).

The study concludes that *"The time has come for America to rethink its transportation investments to accommodate and encourage the Millennial generation in its desire for less car-intensive lifestyles"*. Policy-makers should take advantage of the opportunity presented by Millennials' changing transportation preferences by expanding access to an array of transportation options, including public transportation, bicycling and walking. Reducing vehicle travel this way will save money by heading off the need to spend money on highway expansion

"For these reasons, America should not just accommodate Millennials' desire to drive less, but actively encourage it. ... governments should assist and promote those efforts, while changing transportation policies and investment strategies that undermine development of walkable communities with access to a variety of transportation choices".

Lessons for Canada are fairly obvious, even if we account for a probable time-lag in full development of these trends north of the border. Finally, to return to the problem of texting and driving, it seems evident that a young person texting in a bus, streetcar or train is one less person presenting a public menace from an addiction to messaging.

—Harry Gow, President Transport Action

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Follow us on



Coming soon...

- Coalition for Algoma Passengers trains (CAPT) annual General Meeting is December 17 at 12 noon, at Algoma University, room NW 360
- Transport 2000 Québec will hold its annual Guy Chartrand Prize awards banquet in Montréal (venue t b a) on February 9th 2015.

More News from Transport Action Canada

Transport Action Canada Continuance

As approved by a mail ballot and at our Annual General Meeting in April, we submitted Articles of Continuance under the new Canada Not-for-Profit Corporations Act. Corporations Canada issued the Certificate of Continuance on 14 October.

We must renew our corporate status each year at this date and list our Board of Directors, (as for the old Canada Corporations Act). However, we now also have to submit our financial statements prior to each AGM. Previously these only went to Canada Revenue Agency Charities Division.

We will also be submitting our revised bylaws to both Corporations Canada and CRA. Information about not-for-profit corporations and registered charities is posted on the Corporations Canada and Canada Revenue Agency websites.

Seasonal Fundraising Appeal

With this newsletter, members will find our traditional seasonal greeting card, the "Non-Dinner" invitation. This time of year is important for festivals for major religions and for everyone for celebrations with family and friends. It is also the last chance to donate and receive an official 2014 tax receipt. Transport Action Canada is a registered charity, (registration #119268571 RR0001). Donations postmarked in December or paid via PayPal by December 31 are eligible for a 2014 receipt.

Best wishes from the executive and board of Transport Action for the festival and holiday season and for the New Year 2015.

VISA and MasterCard Discontinued

We are finding that payments by VISA and Mastercard have become costly, relative to the amounts received. There is a \$40 monthly minimum, plus a percentage of payments. It will still be possible for anyone with Internet access to use VISA, MasterCard or American Express via PayPal, where the fees and percentage deducted are less and there is no minimum. There is also greater security if we do not have paper records of credit card numbers and expiry dates in our office. We would like to stop accepting VISA and MasterCard in the New Year. Please let us know if you think this is a problem.

National Capital Region Developments

Despite all attempts to save it, the nearly 100-year old Canadian National, (former Canadian Northern), route up the Ottawa Valley west of Ottawa has now had the rails removed over most of its length west of Nepean Junction, about 22 km west of Ottawa Station. This is the point from which the even older former 1893 Ottawa, Arnprior and Parry Sound Railway still operates as an industrial line west to Arnprior.

With the CN route lifted this year and CP tracks northwest from Smiths Falls to Mattawa removed last year, there is now almost nothing left of the three competing transcontinental railways that once ran the length of the Ottawa Valley. Canada now has no east-west rail routes except those that pass through such major population centres as the Greater Toronto Area.

This is also a setback for those who hoped for a commuter rail network in the National Capital Region. The City of Ottawa

and its Mayor, Jim Watson, have repeatedly made it clear that they see no purpose in commuter rail as a complement to the urban area rapid transit, and therefore no need for the City to acquire these lines before the tracks are removed.

The National Capital Commission made a definitive announcement that it can not accept the City of Ottawa plan for light rail along the Sir John A. Macdonald Parkway. This federal road along the Ottawa River shoreline is largely screened from adjacent housing by trees, most of which would be eliminated by city plans for 0.5 km of track in a cutting and 0.7 km in a concrete box covered by a grassy berm.

The NCC proposed an alternate route across undeveloped land that it would sell to the city, and then 2.5 km cut-and-cover under an arterial road corridor, instead of the 1.8 km already planned by the city. For 60 years this corridor also included a dedicated streetcar route, abandoned in 1959, and now a park.

Transport Action was asked by CBC Radio for our views. We support another look at the proposed route, particularly because it could support stations with much better catchment areas, including residential, school and commercial, as well as better links to bus routes. We have worked closely with local community groups and several of our active Ottawa members actually live in the immediate vicinity.

Although Ottawa Mayor Jim Watson was adamantly opposed to any route changes and highly critical of the NCC and its board members, (who come from across Canada), he agreed after a meeting with federal foreign affairs minister John Baird, who is responsible both for the Ottawa region and the NCC, to take 100 days for another look at the route and to work towards a compromise, in co-operation with the NCC.

The City of Ottawa is also proceeding with environmental assessments, including extension of the diesel O-Train further south and possibly to serve the airport. This line is now called the "Trillium Line", as the name O-Train will also apply to the east-west Confederation Line, whose electrified route and downtown tunnel is scheduled to open in 2018.

Another environmental assessment is commencing to widen the airport parkway as a 4-lane divided highway to the airport and southern suburbs. We feel that this project must be linked with airport O-Train service which was actually part of the original plan for the former North-South light rail project in 2003. Transport Action members are serving on the Agency Consultation Group, Business Consultation Group, and Public Consultation Group for both projects.

Road Crash Victims Remembered

On average, five people die on Canada's roads each day. The National Day of Remembrance for Road Crash Victims is Canada's day to honour these victims and their families, on the 3rd Wednesday in November, this year the 19th. As official steward of the day, the Canadian Council of Motor Transport Administrators (CCMTA) collaborates with partners, advocacy groups and others committed to road safety to raise awareness about those affected by road crashes, including: MADD, Arrive Alive, Josh Field Support Network, Ontario Ministry of Transportation, Parachute Canada, Toronto Fire

Services and Emergency Services, Ontario Association of Chiefs of Police, Alcohol Countermeasures Systems, Lifesaver, Rider Training Institute, and Canadian Association of Road Safety Professionals (CARSP).

Railway Safety Developments

On 24 September the Transportation Safety Board gave an update on the 18 September 2013 collision between an Ottawa doubledecker bus and a VIA Rail train, in which six on the bus died, including the driver. Two new safety advisories were issued, regarding distracted driving due to the use of video monitors by bus drivers, and excessive speed at rail crossings. These were in addition to previous advisories to which the City of Ottawa and VIA Rail had already responded.

A few days later there was another incident where an Ottawa double decker bus stopped beyond the line at the Fallowfield rail and bus transitway crossing in the same area and the gate came down on the bus.



Transport Canada and the City of Ottawa have since issued conflicting and confrontational statements about safety at this crossing.

On 29 October Transport Minister Lisa Raitt made further announcements regarding railway safety in response to the findings of the Lac Mégantic inquiry. The TSB had issued two recommendations and two safety advisories to the department. In response, Transport Canada:

- requires railway companies to meet standardized requirements for hand brake application and put into effect additional physical defences to secure trains;
- will increase oversight by recruiting additional staff to carry out more frequent audits and creating processes for increased information sharing with municipalities;
- will conduct further research on crude oil properties, behaviour and hazards and launching a targeted inspection campaign to verify the classification of rail shipments; and
- will require certain railways (including short lines) to submit training plans to Transport Canada for review, and will conduct an audit blitz of short lines to determine specific training gaps.

On 26 November the Transportation Safety Board announced changes to its Watch List of safety issues. A multi-modal issue is safety management and Transport Canada oversight. While all federally-regulated rail companies must have safety management systems (SMS), not all marine or air operators are required to have formal processes to manage risks. The TSB asks TC to require all companies to implement some formalized process to proactively identify and reduce risk.

Half of the eight issues on the list are rail-specific: following railway signal indications, onboard video and voice recording,

railway crossing safety and transport of flammable liquids by rail. The last item is new since the previous 2012 watch list.

(Transport Action Canada was asked by three national broadcast networks to comment on network television or radio on Transport Minister Raitt's and the TSB's announcements.)

Director General for Rail Safety, Luc Bourdon, will leave his position at Transport Canada, which he has held for many years, during the introduction of the Railway Safety Act amendments, Safety Management Systems, and a new emphasis on working collaboratively with the railways to expedite rule changes, instead of the more time consuming alternative process of changing government regulations.

AMT Dual-mode Commuter Service from *Progressive Railroading and Trains*

The Agence Métropolitaine de Transport's (AMT) new commuter-rail line began service 1 December in the Montréal suburb of Mascouche. A 5:40 a.m. departure with slightly more than 200 passengers arrived at Central Station on-time at 6:45 a.m. There are 11 stations with 2 to be added in the coming months including one adjacent to Sauvé Métro stop.

Construction began in October 2010, the largest public transit project since the extension of the Métro to Laval in 2007. It will serve about 700,000 people in the eastern part of the city and its northeastern periphery. Over 10,000 people obtained free tickets to try the new line. Of the future customers registered, close to 20% say they want to use the service five days a week. The line can handle 5,500 rush hour passengers, almost 30% of whom currently drive, according to AMT.

"The Mascouche line's entry into service is great news for public transit," said Québec Transport Minister Robert Poëti, also minister responsible for the Montreal region. "Mascouche to Montreal in 65 minutes is hard to beat. Some 900 fewer vehicles will be on the road annually as a result, making a major contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions." However, the line is opening six years behind schedule and with a \$671 million price tag it is \$300 million over budget.

The 30 multi-level cars and 5 locomotives were acquired from Bombardier. The cars have three levels, 142 ergonomic seats and a two-way communication system between customers and crew. The dual mode locomotives operate on 25kv AC from Montréal Central Station through Mount Royal Tunnel, and in diesel mode from a junction north of Mount Royal station.

Eight trips in each direction Monday through Friday operate over Genesee & Wyoming's Quebec-Gatineau Railway Trois-Rivières Subdivision, 7.2 miles of new right-of-way in the median of Québec Route 640, and CN's Joliette Sub. Entry to downtown Montreal is via the CN St Laurent and Deux-Montagnes Subs through the historic Mount Royal Tunnel.

