

More News from Transport Action Canada

Transport Action Canada Annual General Meeting, Toronto 14 May 2016

As a federally incorporated Not-For-Profit Corporation, we are required to hold an annual meeting of members within six months of our fiscal year-end on December 31. The Board has decided that this year's AGM will be in Toronto on 14 May. Transport Action Ontario has agreed to host the meeting. The time and location will be announced to all members at least three weeks before the meeting.

At the AGM, the nominating committee appointed by the Board proposes a potential list of directors who have agreed to serve. Nominations may be proposed to the committee or nominated at the meeting if notice of such nominations has been previously given to the secretary. We try to ensure regional diversity among our nominations.

It is the Board of Directors elected at the AGM which then appoints the president and other executive officers at the next board meeting teleconference.

Proposed New President for Transport Action

After the last three years as president of Transport Action Canada, (plus other terms as president over the years), Harry Gow has decided to step down after the AGM in May. However, we hope that he will continue to have an advisory role on the executive as Past President.

Bruce Budd, a long-time member of Transport Action and Transport 2000 and currently secretary of Transport Action Ontario has agreed to put his name forward as the next president. Although this appointment is the responsibility of the next board of directors, the current board has in the meantime appointed Bruce as a vice-president so he can learn the ropes and also speak for the organization. Bruce lives in Toronto and is bilingual, which is a useful skill when dealing with national media, politicians, and the different regions.

Bruce and Harry visited the national office in Ottawa in Ottawa in February.



David Jeanes (treasurer), Harry Gow and Bruce Budd in Ottawa

We are also looking at hiring a part time office manager, to be shared with Transport Action Ontario and also for those

regional matters pertaining to the Prairie and BC regions, which are administered from Ottawa.

The Nipigon Bridge and Canada's Transport Network - Single Points of Failure

On January 10 the deck of the newly-opened but only half-completed Nipigon River Bridge in Northern Ontario lifted about 60 cm in high winds and extreme cold. This important link in the Trans-Canada Highway was closed for 24 hours, but re-opened with a single lane for one-way traffic, excluding heavy trucks, after the deck was weighted down with about 200 tonnes of concrete Jersey barriers.

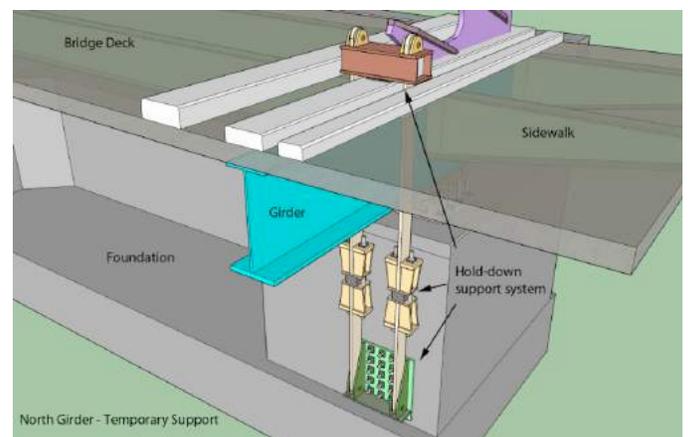
The north half of the new bridge had only opened in December 2015. The old bridge was already being demolished to permit construction of the south half of the bridge.

Although the Canadian Pacific transcontinental mainline parallels the bridge, with potential road access just east and west of the site, there was no provision made for a vehicle, shuttle by rail, even for the heavy or wide loads which are still banned from the bridge. (A rail shuttle for schoolchildren was set up by the Ontario Northland Railway to bypass another critical bridge failure at Latchford, Ontario in 2003).



Nipigon River Bridge, as conceived, with rail line beyond

A temporary hold down device (see image) was fabricated and installed by February 20, to replace 48 bolts which had failed to hold the deck down. The bolts are being investigated at two research laboratories, but the exact cause of the bridge failure has not yet been determined. It is hoped to have the bridge open for two traffic lanes by the end of February.



Deck hold-down device for temporary bridge repair (MTO)

The Nipigon River Bridge has been called the first cable-stayed bridge in Ontario, though a cable-stayed pedestrian bridge opened over Ottawa's Airport Parkway a year earlier in November 2014, but not without some serious problems and delays during construction. Probably the first cable-stayed

bridge in Canada was built in 1871, to carry the St. Lawrence & Ottawa Railway over the Rideau Canal, also in Ottawa.



Ottawa Cable-stayed pedestrian bridge - open November 2014



Cable-stayed railway swing bridge, Dow's Lake, Ottawa - 1871

The new Nipigon Bridge project was conceived as the removal of a 2-lane bottleneck in the Trans-Canada Highway. However, nothing was planned to address the lack of any detour route within Canada. During the initial full closure, the only alternate route was through the United States from Sault Sainte-Marie via Duluth. Even after the partial re-opening there was no provision for heavy trucks or oversized loads.

This lack of resilience in Canada's transportation networks has become a matter for increasing concern. In 2004 when a rail bridge over the Rivière du Sud at Montmagny QC was destroyed by a derailment, there was no alternate rail route from the Port of Halifax to Central Canada. Only because a temporary ice bridge could be constructed was an extended severing of the rail network avoided.

Since the abandonment of both the CN and CP transcontinental lines in the Ottawa Valley, there are now no east-west rail connections except those that pass through Greater Toronto. The CN and CP rail routes are also exposed to combined single points of failure in a number of locations across Canada, with no alternate routes. Ontario examples include Port Hope and Shannonville.

The Nipigon Bridge failure should be a wakeup call for a re-evaluation by all the levels of government involved of the survivability from disaster of Canada's road and rail transportation networks.

Railway Accidents and Positive Train Control

As noted in the last Transport Action Ontario newsletter, the U.S. Congress has pushed back the deadline for implementing Positive Train Control from 2015 to 2018. Canada currently has no plan to require PTC, although it is on the Transportation Safety Board's watch list as one of the most critical issues affecting Canadian Railway safety.

Ottawa's O-Train Trillium Line is currently the only federally-regulated railway with a form of PTC. The INDUSI system from Germany provides automatic emergency braking if a train passes a signal at Stop or if the speed is excessive approaching a station, switch, end-of-track or other hazard. For this reason, the Ottawa operation is considered a safe operation with only one driver in the cab and no other operating personnel on the train.

However, recent accidents in Europe, where Positive Train Control is almost universal on all railway mainlines, indicate that even this protection is not 100% effective. This was the case on 9 February at Bad Aibling in southern Germany where two modern commuter trains collided head-on on a single track with PTC. The cause of the accident is not yet known.

Upcoming Conferences

The annual TRAQ Colloquium on Railway Safety will be held at Sainte-Foy, Québec on March 22-23. Transport Action Director and TRAQ chair, Louis-François Garceau is an organizer of these colloquiums. Transport Action President Harry Gow is a speaker. Details at www.groupe-traq.com/

The Railway Association of Canada is organizing the annual Rail Summit in Toronto on May 11-13. (This immediately precedes the Transport Action Canada AGM, also in Toronto). Details are at www.railcan.ca/news/events/railgov_2016

New Parliamentary Rail Caucus

The Railway Association of Canada has created a Parliamentary Rail Caucus to be chaired by Sherry Romanado, Liberal Member of Parliament for Longueuil-Charles-LeMoine, Quebec, and co-chaired by Marilyn Gladu, Conservative Member of Parliament for Sarnia-Lambton, Ont.

"It is an honour and privilege to be asked to chair the Parliamentary Rail Caucus," said Romanado. "I am looking forward to working with the railway industry and parliamentarians from all sides of the aisle."

The Parliamentary Rail Caucus will encourage dialogue between railways and parliamentarians of all political stripes and will provide a platform for discussing pressing policy issues. It will also serve to inform members of the critical role that railways play in the Canadian economy and the potential for Canada's green rail infrastructure to support the country's sustainable growth.

"The rail industry is a critical part of our economy and I look forward to co-chairing this committee," said Gladu. "We will ensure that input from all regions of the country is part of the ongoing dialogue to ensure continued support for the safe growth of the rail sector."

The first meeting of the Parliamentary Rail Caucus will be held on March 9.

Transport 2000 40th Anniversary Celebration

Harry Gow and four others who were present at the inaugural meeting, described on page 1, held a reunion in Ottawa on February 18. It was an opportunity to look back over the many intervening years during which we have seen both dramatic cuts to passenger rail service, but also to the creation of VIA Rail Canada in 1977 but also several substantial rail passenger investments.

The picture on page 1 shows a later meeting from that first year. Michael Jackson, chair of the Regina Rail Committee and organizer of the October 1976 National Passenger Rail Conference is at the head of the table and Doug Stoltz, left.

The following picture shows the 2016 anniversary gathering with Gerry Gaugl, Doug Stoltz, Minda Bojin, Doug Smith and Harry Gow. David Jeanes was also present.



Photos: David Jeanes



Harry celebrated the completion of 40-years of advocacy for public transportation by cutting one of several cakes enjoyed at the occasion. The evening ended with views of slides that brought back memories from the early years of passenger train advocacy.

Online Membership Renewal

If you receive the newsletter by email, you should also receive your membership renewal notice the same way. We do this, since one of the reasons for electronic newsletter distribution is to save postage, which is now as expensive as the printing cost. If we mailed paper renewal notices we would therefore lose half of this cost saving.

You can renew online by making your payment with PayPal at www.transport-action.ca and you can either use your PayPal account, if you have one, or a credit card.

You can also go to the www.paypal.com website to send membership payments or donations directly to <pay@transport-action.ca>. You do not need to email the membership notice unless changing your contact information, membership category, etc. Thank you for renewing.

Luc Côté wins Guy Chartrand Prize

The layout editor of Transport Action Canada's newsletter, Luc Coté, has won the Guy Chartrand prize for Development and improvement of public transport at the annual awards dinner on 8 February of our Québec affiliate organization, Transport 2000 Québec.

Luc Coté is Director of transit for the City of Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu. The citation for the prize says that Luc simplified life for riders of the city's transit system. In 2014-2015, the service was recast and made more user-friendly and efficient for its users. Luc is a long-time supporter of Transport 2000 Québec and was at one time President. He has also served as vice-president of Transport Action Canada (formerly Transport 2000 Canada).

Sincere congratulations, Luc!



L-R: Transport 2000 Qc president François Pepin, acting-mayor of St-Jean-sur-Richelieu Yvan Berthelot, Luc Côté, former VIA Rail and current AMT CEO Paul Côté. (Photo Transport 2000 Québec)

Official Receipts for Income Tax Purposes

As a registered charity under the Income Tax Act, (registration number 119268571 RR0001), Transport Action Canada issues tax receipts for donations and for membership fees. (Membership fees are eligible because they do not provide tangible benefits other than the newsletters and the right to vote at members' meetings). We do not normally issue receipts for smaller amounts, unless requested,

To save costs, the receipts are mailed with the newsletters throughout the year. For those who do not receive printed newsletters, they are mailed separately. We are also investigating sending tax receipts by email.

All remaining tax receipts for 2015 will be mailed by the end of February. If you do not get an expected receipt, please contact us. To avoid confusion, receipts for the 2016 tax year, (for donations paid or postmarked after 31 December), will not be mailed until after 30 April.

Transport Action Canada maintains several restricted funds, some of which are applied to projects in specific regions of the country. Please note that Transport Action Ontario is not a registered charity, so the Ontario portion of membership fees or donations to Transport Action Ontario are not eligible for tax receipts. Transport Action Atlantic is a registered charity and issues its own receipts for payments received.

Information on all registered charities in Canada is available at www.cra.gc.ca/charities

Gallery of Some Successful or Less than 100% Successful Transport Projects in 2015



Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport: foot tunnel opened, but runway will not be extended for jets.



Ottawa O-Train Trillium Line: new diesel light rail trains, (above and below), but expected capacity, frequency, speed and reliability not achieved. Plans re-emerge for an airport service with these trains.



UP (Union-Pearson) Express runs from dedicated downtown station to Pearson Airport Terminal 1: new tracks, grade separation, diesel multiple units.



Toronto Union Station: exterior restoration done, Front Street revitalized, subway station enlarged.



Comfortable seating and spacious luggage areas on UP Express, but not enough airport passengers. In late February Metrolinx cut fares to boost ridership.



Toronto Union Station: Atrium over train tracks nearly-complete; York East GO Concourse opened.



New streetcars (above and below) begin to appear on Toronto streets after manufacturing problems. Tunneling progresses on Eglinton LRT but cost overruns on Spadina Subway extension.



Brockville Station: heritage restoration to 1870's appearance completed; could use more trains.

