

Train 651 Rally – 24 SEP 2022 – Cobourg, Ontario

I attended the rally in Cobourg, Ontario, today. As there were no suitable trains that would have allowed me to drive from my home in Kingston to Cobourg in time to arrive for the 10:30 rally, I drove, arriving at about 09:50. That gave me about 40 minutes to poke around and take some pictures.

Approaching the station's driveway on Division Street, I noticed two police cars parked on the right side of the road facing south with their red and blue lights flashing. A portable speaker had been set up along with a couple of tables. A few people were milling about.



On entering the driveway, up from Division Street up to the station area, I noticed two more police cars parked on the south side of the driveway facing east.

Arriving at the station area, I found various areas around the station to be under construction.



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Some trackside work was also underway, though also, apparently, paused for the weekend.



The station itself, is an interesting mix of the old and the new. The heritage portion of the building is constructed of red brick on a stone foundation and with stone accents.



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The recent additions allow passengers to safely access the second platform providing up to three tracks of service to passengers and a bypass track for freight trains.



The older part of the building still serves as a ticketing hall and waiting room, pleasantly retaining a taste of the old while facilitating the new.

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Save for the construction, the setting was beautiful. Clusters of people began to arrive. Many seemed to know one another and conversed quietly.

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I soon noticed that people were gradually making their way back down to Division Street, through the dappled morning light provided by the lovely trees overhanging the driveway.

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At 10:30, things got underway.

After battering in a few signs to make their points,

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David Piccini, the local Member of Provincial Parliament spoke about the need for train 651 to be reinstated,



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as did Philip Lawrence, the Member of Parliament.



The mayor of Quinte West, Jim Harrison and a number of other local dignitaries made their own presentations.



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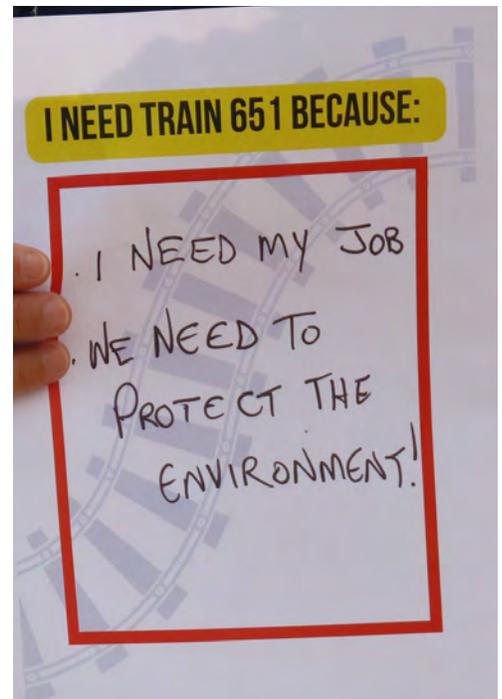
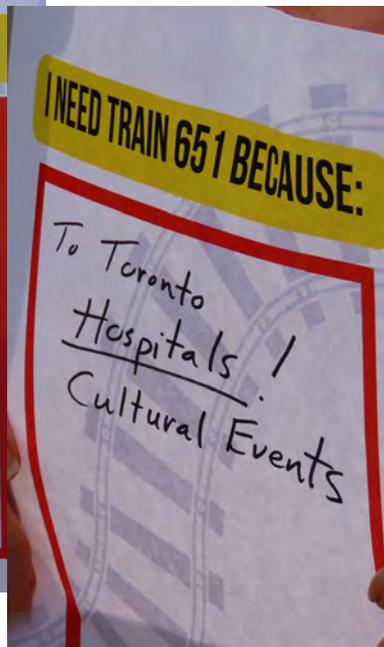
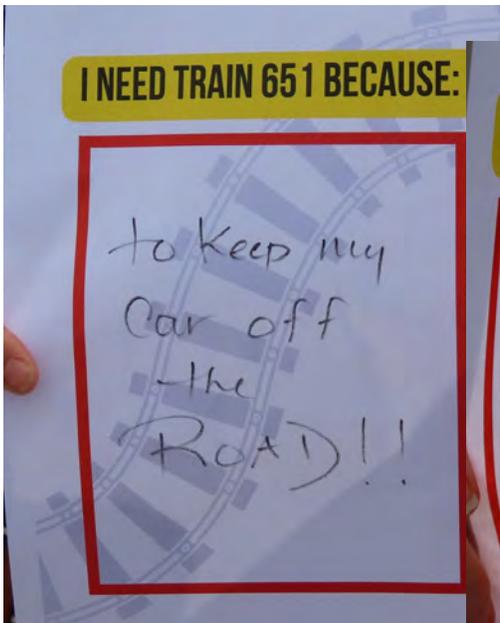
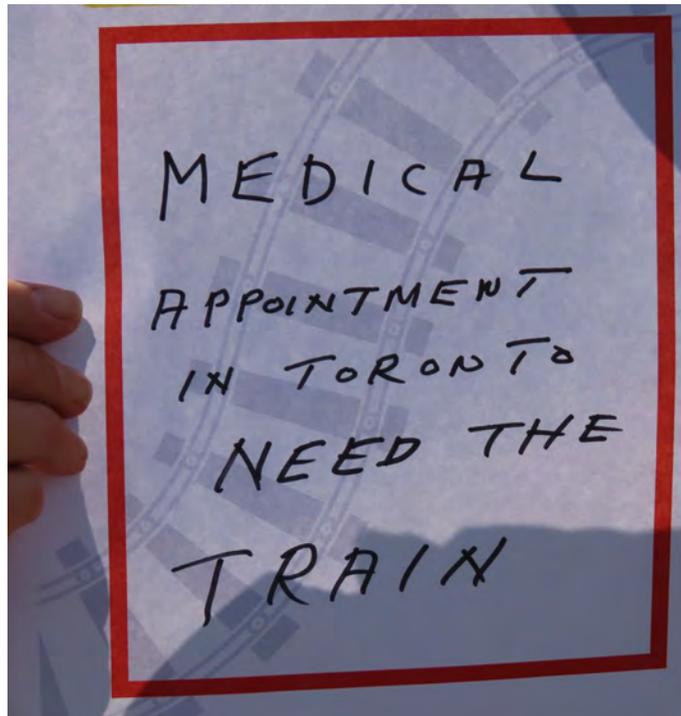
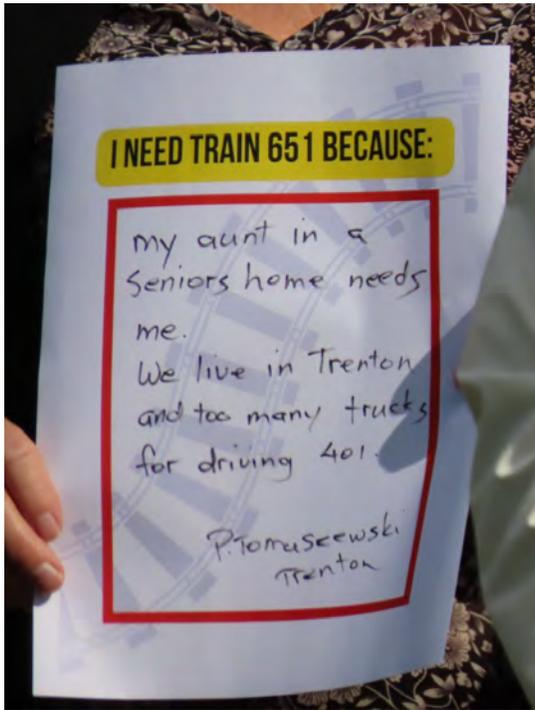
Various local residents spoke of their need for Train 651. One person explained that he had been using the train so long he actually met his wife on the train.



Quite a number mentioned that they work in Toronto but live in Cobourg. They need Train 651 to get to work on time. Indeed, quite a number of people mentioned that, while a number of communities, including Cobourg, need Train 651, Toronto needs the train.

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A number of people held up sheets explaining their early morning travel needs.



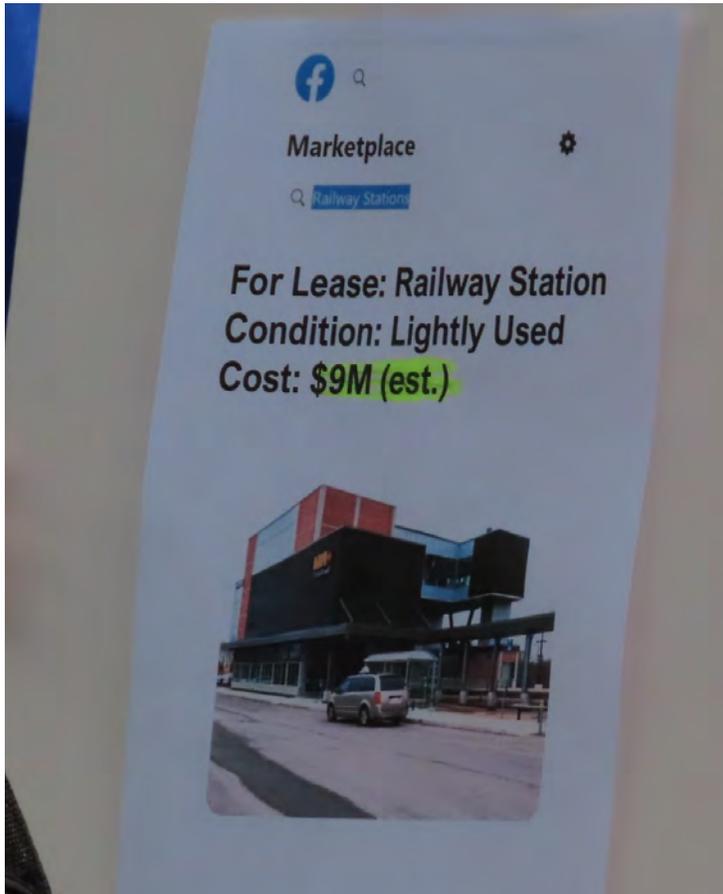
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Even children and whole families got into the act.



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One spoof was seen, implying that VIA would get better use out of the Cobourg Station if it were actually used to support Train 651.



As well, buttons were handed out.



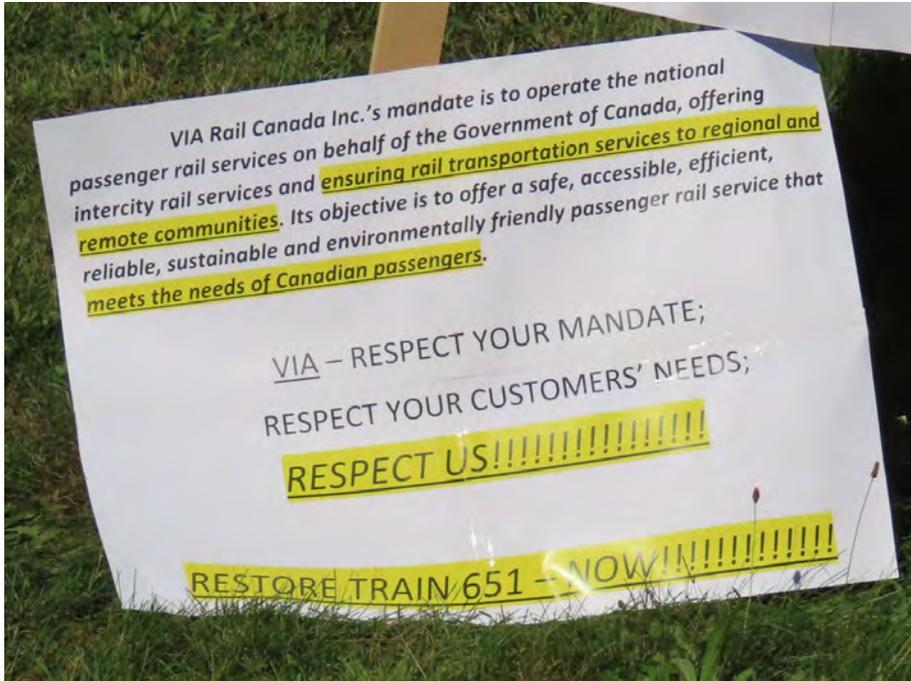
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One person adapted a childhood sign to her message:



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Someone else resorted to a more formal appeal:



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While others had a direct approach.



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A followup sheet was available for people to sign.

NAME	EMAIL	PHONE NUMBER
Suzanne Gurnod	sherylhottel@post.queensu.ca	905-332-7169
Laura Bridges	lbrides@post.queensu.ca	647-679-3774
Kendal Burton	kendalburton@post.queensu.ca	416-884-1111
Suzanne Seguin	S.Seguin@bell.net	905-884-1111
Michelle McQuinn	Michelle.McQuinn@post.queensu.ca	905-332-7169

As well, copies of a report on the importance of Train 651 were distributed.



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A modest media presence was observed.



I made a brief speech informing the group that Transport Action Ontario was seized of the issue and intervening at the highest levels.

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After an hour or so, assembled citizens, numbering in the order of sixty or so, calmly dispersed to resume their Saturday afternoon activities.

