

More News from Transport Action Canada

Appointments of Officers and Volunteer Roles

Under the new Canada Not for Profit Corporations Act, the board of directors, (elected at our Annual General Meeting on May 9th), appoints the executive officers, at its first meeting.

At the board teleconference on May 26th, appointments were: president - Harry Gow, Saint-Antoine-sur-Richelieu, QC; secretary - Anton Turriffin, Toronto, ON; treasurer - David Jeanes, Ottawa, ON; VP east - Marcus Garnet, Dartmouth, NS; VP west - Peter Lacey, Winnipeg, MB. The past president is a voting member of the executive, so David Jeanes declined to serve in two positions and the board asked a previous president, David Glastonbury, Ottawa, ON, to fill this role.

The board approved changes to bank signing officers. Since the unexpected death of our volunteer office manager Bert Titcomb in May, David Jeanes has taken on responsibility for operation of the Ottawa office, David Leibold handles website and social media and Helga Jeanes deals with mail, banking and newsletter production. We are launching a search for new volunteers for the various office responsibilities.

The Ottawa Office in the Bronson Centre, which moved to a smaller space a year and a half ago, is a functional space with a large library area that can also be configured to seat up to 20 people theatre-style for meetings or presentations. There is a small boardroom/workroom with room for up to 8 persons at the table. Finally there is a separate room with desks, our computers, and financial, membership and corporate records. We disposed of a number of tables, chairs and desks that were in our former larger office, and most of these items found homes with other non-profit organizations in our building.

A very important task was taken on by Elizabeth Hill in the spring to track down and contact as many of our lapsed members as possible. In some cases we no longer had correct mail, email or phone information. In other cases, members may not have received a renewal notice and eventually their membership lapsed. (We keep sending newsletters and renewal notices for six months after a membership expires). Elizabeth has provided over 160 updates to our membership records. In some cases people said they would renew online; for others we are mailing hard copy renewal notices with the newsletters, and for some we will not have any further communication. Thank you Elizabeth!

Newsletter Paper Change

With this issue of Transport Action, we are switching to the use of white paper instead of cream, which we have used for many years. The Atlantic, Ontario, and Western newsletters are already published on white paper.

Photograph colour rendition is better on white; our entire issue is now in colour due to lower colour printing costs. This change represents a saving in paper cost. Since the cream paper had to be a special order, we will also no longer have to carry a substantial inventory just for Transport Action.

Many of you receive the newsletter electronically and see it on your screen in colour on white. If you print it, it is probably on white paper. We hope you agree with this decision to end an old tradition that no longer had a useful purpose.

Ottawa's Trillium Line - A Personal View

Ben Novak P.Eng., MCP, Dip. BA

Recently the City of Ottawa spend a considerable amount (some \$60Million) on the only rail rapid transit facility presently in operation in Ottawa, to enhance capacity and frequency. This entailed adding passing tracks and also changing the rolling stock. I had to see for myself.

A little background first. The original Trillium Line went from the Bayview area South to Greenboro, along a disused CPR track, which the City had acquired. There are many such disused tracks or rights of way in Canadian cities. More on that will be said later. It was then called the O-Train and travelled some 8 km south from the existing east-west BRT System (Bus Rapid Transit), tying into it slightly west of the city center. Three Bombardier Talent double articulated DMU (diesel multiple unit) vehicles, (two in service and one on stand-by) were used and met at the Carleton University station, where a passing track permitted two-way operation at approximately 15-minute frequency, starting in October 2001.

Old jointed track was quickly replaced with welded rail in 2003. This whole system was first created for a mere \$16 million, or about \$2 million per km. This includes track, stations, signalling, maintenance facility and rolling stock, (for a 2-year trial period). The reason this CPR track was available is the fact that railways have restructured their freight operations and find these tracks to be too near the spreading city development – the very reason they should be attractive for easy transit planning and development. The writer published a paper as long ago as 1978 pointing out this very fact, and the wisdom of using these priceless continuous ribbons of rights-of-way, which if assembled today would cost a fortune. Cities such as Edmonton, Toronto, and Vancouver for example, make considerable use of this treasure. Ottawa has so far only used a small part of such available rail assets.

Back to the up-graded service I sampled. It now uses four Alstom LINT single-articulated vehicles of similar dimension as the Talents, but slightly smaller, with two on standby for a total of six. They are also DMUs. (The picture shows the 41-metre long articulated LINT train on the single-track line).



I planned to ride the system from end-to-end in both directions and did so one fine Wednesday mid-morning. The vehicles are

of course still quite new and spotless in appearance. The increased frequency is enhanced by the visual contact of at least one vehicle either approaching or leaving the Bayview Station. I sat down in anticipation and was quickly rewarded with a smooth start and rather good acceleration one would expect from electric power. (The picture shows the interior with wheelchair spaces and tip-up seats on the left and steps up to seats above the motor and power trucks and to the cab.)



The LINTs are propelled by two diesel engines with mechanical transmissions. One can sense gear changes if one really pays attention. The distance to the first new passing track is short and the meet with the opposite train flawlessly rolling slowly through the siding and main track. This was repeated at the other passing track, which also occurs between station stops. The mid-point siding is still the Carleton University stop as in the original layout. In a few minutes more we reached the Greenboro end of line, after a stop at Confederation Heights. (The picture is of the station platform with level boarding for wheelchairs at Greenboro Station).



It was a very comfortable ride, with light vehicle occupancy at that time of day. OC Transpo, the organisation operating the system, is to be commended for the service they provide on this line.

It certainly is real proof that this sort of service, using existing rail corridors and light rail self-powered equipment is by far the most cost effective and pleasant way to enhance public transit in many location that literally cry out for the use of existing corridors. The enhanced service, including purchase

of rolling stock and significantly up-graded signalization, came to about \$10 million per kilometer. This still represents a reasonable cost. Demand for the service has always outstripped projections and is presently at about 12,000 per day. This will soon increase as some BRT services are reduced during construction of the 'other' LRT line called the Confederation Line. It is under construction in both tunnel and on grade for some \$2 billion for 13 km, or about \$153 Million per km including 3 km in tunnel in the downtown. Admittedly the two systems are not really comparable in function, but nonetheless the numbers present food for thought.

Gatineau's Rapibus Bus Rapid Transit

The Friends of the O-Train, most of whom are also members of Transport Action, recently had an excursion to view the Rapibus Bus Rapid Transit system in the City of Gatineau. The dedicated bus roadway was built along an existing rail corridor, which was acquired by the Société des Transports de l'Outaouais (STO). However the Québec Ministry of Transport required that the rail line, which was in the way of the planned busway, be retained but relocated to one side of the right-of-way, (pictured below, with busway in the foreground and station beyond), and providing also for a bicycle path.



The ten stations are fairly simple, with at-grade pedestrian crossings, basic shelters, and in some cases Park-and-Rides (Parc-o-Bus). The most elaborate station is La Cité with the only pedestrian overbridge (pictured below), ticket office, Wi-Fi, and quality amenities such as a coffee bar (also pictured).





The most remarkable shared re-use of rail infrastructure is the four-span bridge over the Gatineau River, originally built in 1877 but with new steelwork in the 1920's. The deck now supports bus and rail traffic, with directional signalling for buses. A bicycle path is attached to the left side of the bridge. The 12 km busway reduces bus travel times but buses still use existing roadways to reach downtown Gatineau and Ottawa.



VIA Rail Restores Brockville Station

The historic Brockville VIA Rail station was built in 1871-72 as a Union Station for the Grand Trunk and Canadian Pacific Railways. It provided the connection between CP trains from Ottawa via Smiths Falls and Grand Trunk trains between Ottawa and Toronto. Such connections continued with CN-CP Pool Trains from the 1930s and by CN after 1966. Today VIA operates both routes, but many trains do not stop.

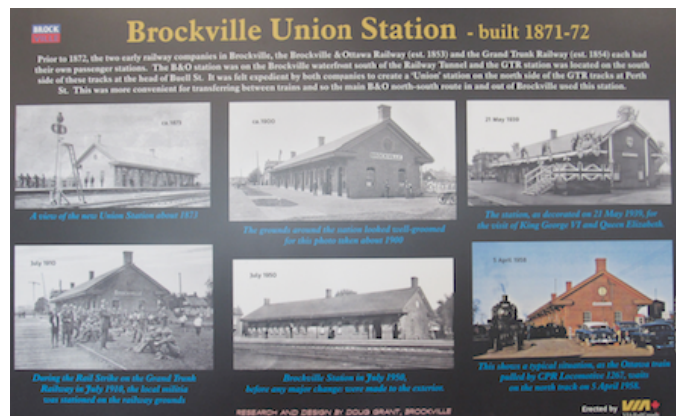
For many decades the original station appearance has been hidden under vinyl siding and it bore little resemblance to the station of 1872. Because of this alteration, it was not

considered for designation under the federal Heritage Railway Stations Protection Act.

Nevertheless, a vigorous campaign by Brockville citizens, led by historian Doug Grant, persuaded VIA to restore the station in-situ to its 1870's appearance, rather than build a modern structure as in Brockville and Cobourg. The station was rededicated at a well-attended ceremony on July 23, with the participation of VIA President and CEO, Yves Desjardins-Siciliano (pictured right), Brockville Mayor David Henderson (centre) and Leeds-Grenville MP Gord Brown (left).



The historic appearance of the station is displayed in panels (pictured) researched and created by Doug Grant, who was congratulated by the speakers and loudly applauded by those present, for his determined efforts to restore the station.



The vinyl siding is gone and the appearance of most of the segmental-headed windows and doors, roofline, and eaves

brackets restored. However, the original brick was damaged and a new brick veneer had to be applied that closely matches the original, (as seen in the preceding poster and picture).

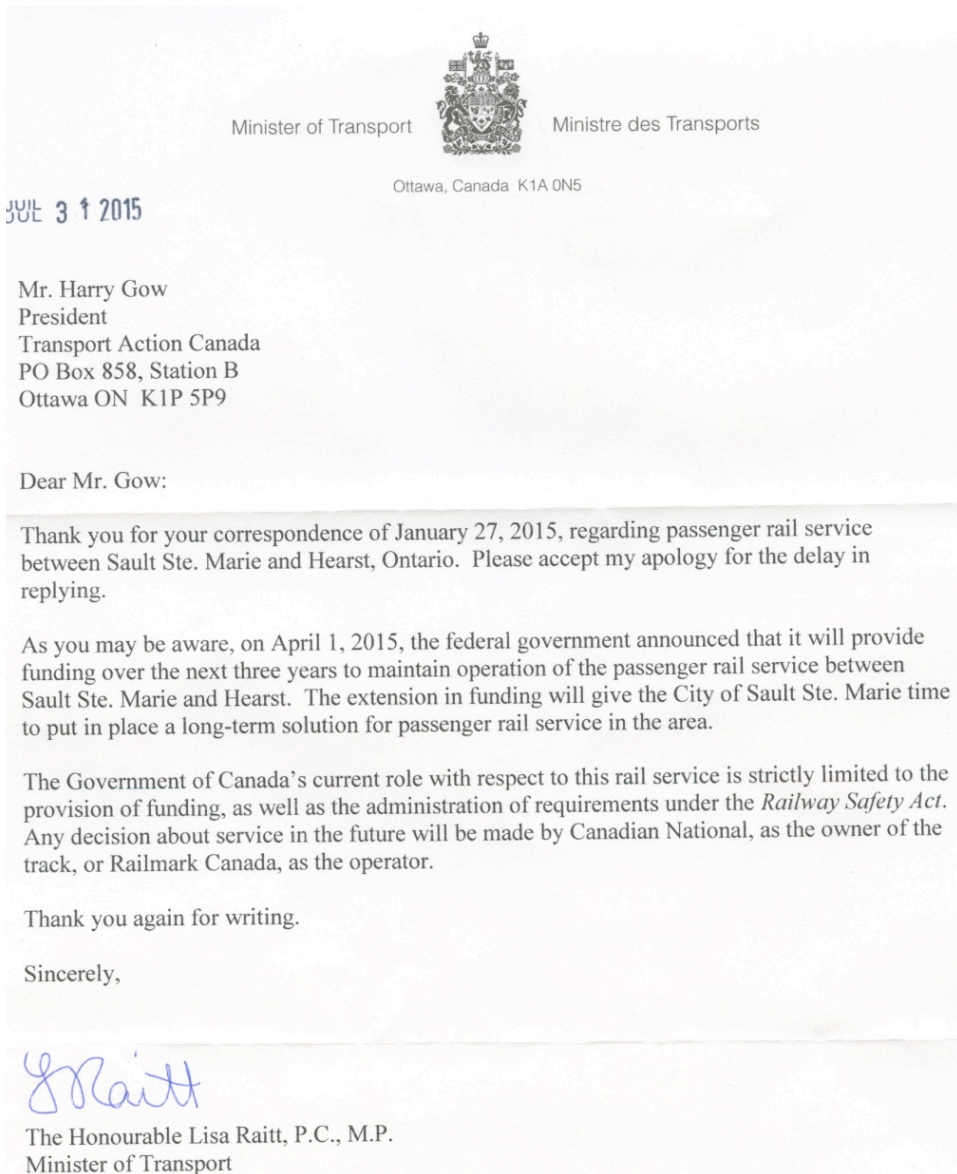
Finally, a historic mural montage that was previously attached to the station wall, has been relocated in a robust steel frame next to the restored station. The rear of the mural identifies the many persons depicted, with biographical information about each one. This important piece of community art and history is now more visible and is well-protected.

In response to questions and appeals for more frequent services and lower fares for Brockville, Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano repeated the oft-heard phrase "use it or lose it" and urged those present to help persuade others to try the train. He did indicate, however that added frequencies may be coming. (Since the day of this event some significant investments have been announced for VIA Rail's corridor services.)



All pictures on pages 5 to 8 are by Transport-Action treasurer David Jeanes who was pleased to travel from Ottawa to attend this rededication event as a guest of VIA Rail.

Minister of Transport on Algoma Train Service



The letter on the left was received from the Minister of Transport in response to a letter from Transport Action president Harry Gow more than six months ago, urging government action to save the Algoma train. Harry has been personally involved in the campaign to save the passenger service, including speaking visits to the area.

Despite the ongoing efforts of our affiliate organization, the Coalition for Algoma Passenger Trains (CAPT), the passenger train service has now been terminated by Canadian National, because of the inability of their selected operator, Railmark, to develop an acceptable business plan to operate the service.

Minister Raitt in this letter makes it clear that the government will provide funding and administer safety rules, but that it is up to Canadian National and Railmark to make decisions about service.

Despite the termination of service, CAPT is continuing its campaign to raise public support for action from the government to reinstate the Algoma passenger operation.

Will this become an election issue in the affected ridings?