

TRANSPORT ACTION NEWSLETTER

Volume 36 no 3 — December 2015



IN THIS ISSUE

INTERNATIONAL



A venerable pioneer !
Page 3

QUEBEC



End of AMT ?
Page 3

NATIONAL



New direction for VIA ?
Page 4

New government, new position NO TO JETS AT BILLY BISHOP

On November 12, new Transport Minister Marc Garneau announced that Ottawa would not re-open the Tripartite Agreement that limits Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport to turboprop-based commercial airline service. This effectively ends Porter Airline's request to have Toronto Island airport's (TIA) runways lengthened so that Porter can convert its fleet to jets. The Tripartite Agreement was first negotiated in 1983 between the City of Toronto, the Toronto Port Authority (now PortsToronto), and Transport Canada. This agreement was the culmination of years of struggle by Toronto citizens to curb commercial airline operations on Toronto's waterfront. The agreement was amended in 1985 to allow use of Dash-8 turboprop planes.

TIA runway expansion for jet planes was an issue in the federal election of October 19. Toronto area Liberal and NDP candidates were opposed to airport expansion for jets. Last June, the Liberal Party's GTA caucus sent a letter to the Toronto City Council affirming opposition to jets. The day following the federal election, re-elected MP Adam Vaughan (Spadina- Ft. York) announced the Tripartite Agreement would not be reopened. Lingering concerns that the Liberals would back down on this promise have now been largely laid to rest by Garneau's pronouncement.

Porter's push for jets began April 10, 2013

when it announced a major expansion plan based on the purchase of Bombardier's CS100 regional jet not yet in production. New routes would take Porter to western Canada, California, Florida and the Caribbean. With fleet expansion would come more daily flights. Passenger volumes using Porter at TIA would double from the current 2.4 million boardings; Toronto would end up having the equivalent of an Ottawa airport on its waterfront. Porter officially asked that the Tripartite Agreement be amended in a letter sent to Mayor Rob Ford on April 22, 2013. It asked for inclusion of the CS100 plane on the list of planes allowed to use the airport, and for a runway extension at both ends of 168m, a figure later extended to 200m by Porter (Sept. 17, 2013).

Needless to say, opposition to expansion and jets was swift and vocal. Opposition did not just come from Toronto Island residents, but from residents and developers along the length of Toronto's waterfront. It coalesced around two groups, the smaller No Jets T.O. with a considerable web presence, and the larger Greater Waterfront Coalition (GWC) representing some 50 non-profit groups in the Toronto area. Early in the public debate, in March of 2014, TAO contributed a technical paper on safety issues which significantly broadened the content of that debate raising concerns that were not being addressed by Porter.

Continue on page 2

Porter pushed hard for an early adoption of its plan, but that was not to be. A municipal election was on the horizon for October of 2014. Mayor Rob Ford had already lost control of Council by 2012. But councillors still remembered how David Miller was elected mayor by opposing a proposed bridge to TIA in 2003. With the TIA airport expansion potentially dividing voters, in April 2014 Council took the issue off the table by postponing any decision to 2016 by requiring that a comprehensive environmental assessment (EA) be completed. Council's decision set out the required EA in great detail, including setting up a stakeholders group to monitor the process. The rigorous terms of the Council's decision were in no small measure the result of citizen activism on the issue.



Several other recent developments should be noted. On April 2 of this year, for the first time, Air Canada came out forcefully against jets at TIA. The Air Canada position is that, if jets were allowed, it would also operate

jet services from TIA. But it prefers to keep jets at Pearson airport and says that TIA can thrive with only turboprops.

On September 15, Air Canada revealed that it had commissioned the internationally recognized New York consulting firm Oliver Wyman to assess the proposed expansion of TIA for jets. While the full report has not been released, copies have circulated to the press which has reported many of its findings. Its assessment largely supports the concerns that Transport Action has formulated. But the Oliver Wyman report has gone further and has identified additional key issues.

The report pointed out that real costs have been grossly underestimated. For airside safety requirements, costs would be closer to \$1 billion, with a similar level of cost for the City on landside improvements, such as providing for parking for an airport with a projected 4-5 million passengers annually. The added size and weight of the CS100 aircraft will require runways of 6000 ft. or 1830 meters, and much wider marine exclusion zones including extensive runway lighting. As do cars on roads, greater runway length is required for take-offs and landings in wet weather due to rain, snow and ice conditions. The report estimates that as much as a quarter of all jet flights would be diverted to Pearson airport without full-length runways given the normal frequency of wet weather conditions on Toronto's waterfront. It is also not clear whether a safe missed approach can be found for a CS100 jet given the tall buildings now on the waterfront. A longer lower slope flight path would be necessary for a situation where a fully loaded CS100 loses the power of one of its engines on take-off. As of this September, Transport Canada has strengthened its safety requirements for airports, standards that Porter has expected will not apply to their plan because the design process is already underway. Porter has already benefited from grandfathering and this is not likely to continue for its jets.

The Greater Waterfront Coalition set out its safety concerns in a report dated June 22, 2015. The Oliver Wyman concerns, some

especially serious, can now be added to those of the Coalition.

It should be noted that TAO is a member of the GWC steering committee and has provided key technical and background information employed by GWC in its reports, deputations, press conferences, and television appearances. In addition to the safety report mentioned above, GWC released a report on its economic concerns April 12, 2015.

We speculate that Porter came forward with its expansion plan in part because it perceived an alignment of the stars. The Toronto mayor was on side, the council had taken a more conservative turn, and it had a supportive federal government including the Minister of Transport. But Porter clearly underestimated the depth of citizen response and the sophistication of that response. It has taken a major public effort to dig out the truth about the negative impacts jets will have. They are for long-haul and that's a very different function for TIA and one that should be left to Pearson airport built for that purpose.

It is becoming clear that jets at TIA would be a major public works project with a massive runway, much enlarged marine exclusion zones additional lengths of approach lighting, large jet blast deflectors, huge new investment in parking and road connections, and, of course, more flights means more noise. The disruption of boating in the Toronto inner-harbour will be permanent. And for what?

Looking at what is proposed dispassionately, Porter's plan is about unfair advantage. A downtown airport all to itself is Porter's competitive edge in the short-haul air travel market to which it now wants to add long-haul flights. There really isn't physical room for additional providers at TIA. So Porter has motive beyond hyping its convenience and flying refined. Estimates of the cost of transforming TIA are now approaching \$2 billion in public monies. But Pearson airport is already in place, and the province has recently opened a fast train service to it from downtown Toronto. With capacity at Pearson, expanding TIA is a gross misallocation of scarce public funds which would be better invested in other badly needed transportation projects in the GTHA.

A misallocation of resources to expand TIA for jets has the effect of trashing investments that have already been made to revitalize the Toronto waterfront. Over \$1 billion in public dollars has been invested in waterfront revitalization in the last 10 years along with an estimated \$2.6 billion in private investment. The lakefront has become a residential area and a location for offices and new cultural and entertainment businesses. They all depend on a livable public space that is contemplative, relaxing and part playground, where people can move about with active transportation. An industrial use like a jet airport is incompatible and in the long run destructive of the new waterfront now in place.

TAO supports the decision to keep jets out of TIA. We do support investments in the intercity passenger rail system, the development of High Performance Rail that could at lower cost provide frequent intercity transportation in southwestern, central and eastern Ontario. That would be a worthy use of infrastructure funds that Ontario and the new federal government are now considering spending. And a quality, fast and reliable train system would make excellent use of Toronto's Union Station on dry land just up from Lake Ontario. — *Tony Turrutin, National Secretary Transport Action Canada*

A pioneer celebrate its 150th birthday

The first preserved railway in the world is celebrating its 150th anniversary. An Act to enable the construction of the seven-and-a-half mile 2' 3" gauge Talyllyn Railway in Wales was passed by Parliament in 1865, and in 1950 the still-operating line was taken over and operated from 1951 by railway enthusiasts following the death of its then owner.

The Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society celebrated its line's sesquicentennial with panache, inviting the BBC to broadcast direct from its Tywyn Wharf Station. Locomotives from two neighbouring narrow-gauge railways were invited to the party, and hundreds of TRPS members and guests took part in the festivities which included steam-locomotive-hauled special trains including two engines built in 1865!

Without the vision of the railway's builders and that of the 1950-1951 preservationists the international movement to conserve and operate heritage railways might have taken longer to grow and some of today's heritage lines might not exist. — *Harry Gow*



FAST TRACK

Did you know...

In 1995, the first Amtrak Cascades train passed north of the US Border, linking Vancouver BC to Seattle. Today, Amtrak is offering two daily round trips.

And the number is...

107 000

The number of passengers who rode Amtrak in Vermont in 2014. The number could double with the planned extension to Montreal

A model for rural communities



When Ted Bartlett and I visited the restored heritage Casselman station we were impressed by the neatly kept station garden, the signage, 417 Bus Line's commuter parking, and posted timetables for VIA Rail and Greyhound, all of which serve this municipally-owned facility. At times the station is unstaffed, the VIA waiting room unlocks automatically at train times, and there is a shelter for Greyhound passengers. The building, which has room for the impressive local history museum, the (open) waiting room, an office, and the staffed information bureau which also operates as a Greyhound ticket outlet. Casselman bought the station for one dollar from VIA, and was renovated and restored with Ontario heritage grants and municipal money, and reopened for the public.

All-in-all, the Village of Casselman and its bus and rail partners have put together a package that could serve as a model for towns across Canada. — *Harry Gow*



“the Brockville Subdivision, consisting of 28 kilometres of single track between Smiths Falls and Brockville, in Ontario will strengthen our rail network dedicated to passenger trains in the Ottawa region, where VIA Rail owns more than 200 kilometres of track”,

— Yves Desjardins-Siciliano, VIA Rail's President and Chief Executive Officer

End of AMT ?

Quebec's Transport Minister recently announce a new era of transit operating and planning in the Montreal region. Robert Poëti tabled Bill 76 which will create the Autorité régionale de transport métropolitain and the Réseau de transport métropolitain. The Autorité will become a new regional public transit planning body, and will outline a regional plan based on the land-use plan already put in place by the Montreal Metropolitan Community.

The Réseau will be responsible for operating trains and buses outside Montreal, Laval and Longueuil, merging all the regional bus services known mostly as CITs and CRTs. The transit agencies for the major cities in the region, the Société de transport de Montréal, the Réseau de transport de Longueuil and the Société de transport de Laval will remain as they are, though some of their planning powers will be transferred to the new Autorité.

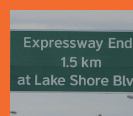
According to the minister, the new structure will be more efficient because it merges 16 agencies into just five.



Why Hamilton politicians were late at a political appointment regarding mobility in Queen's Park ?



A It's hard to find parking spot for 20 cars at the same place



B They took the wrong highway exit.



C They were stuck in traffic

Answer: C

Blueprint unveiled for passenger rail in Canada

The first spike of a new era

The government of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has been urged to undertake a sweeping review of passenger rail from coast to coast, and to initiate action to bring this country in step with the other nations in the G7 community. The challenge was unveiled two days after the new Liberal administration took office, at an event commemorating National Railway Day. November 7 was the 130th anniversary of the last spike ceremony that marked completion of a continuous rail link from across the country.



VIA IN THE ROCKIES

The VIA 1-4-10 Plan was commissioned by Transport Action Canada and its regional affiliates. The comprehensive document prepared by transportation consultant Greg Gormick explores the past, present and future of passenger rail, tracing its decline since the flawed creation of VIA Rail Canada by order-in-council in 1978, and offering practical and achievable suggestions for its reconstruction. An advance copy of the report was delivered to Transport Minister Marc Garneau, with public release during an afternoon Railway Day event at the VIA station in St. Mary's, Ontario, sponsored by Transport Action Ontario.

"The timing is doubly appropriate," said Ted Bartlett, president of Transport Action Atlantic, "because a government that has embraced 'real change' is taking office so close to the anniversary of an event so significant to Canada's very existence. We're asking

Minister Garneau to include this issue among his priorities."

The VIA 1-4-10 Plan includes among its key recommendations that the new government appoint a highly-qualified Rail Passenger Action Force to advise the minister and to chart a firm course for the future. Essential to success, the consultant believes, is a long-overdue act of Parliament to establish a sound legislative foundation for VIA Rail Canada, to clearly define its mandate, make it accountable to parliamentarians, and give it specific rights in its relationships with freight railroads over whose tracks it must travel.

The document makes numerous suggestions for realistic and achievable objectives over one, four and ten-year time frames – hence its title. Among them, the return of VIA's maritime train, the Ocean, to daily service is proposed as a reasonable first-year objective.

"A daily train is clearly what is needed to meet the very real transportation needs of Maritimers – especially those who live in northern New Brunswick," Bartlett said. "It must always be remembered that these are Canadians who have few other public transportation options; for them the Ocean is very, very important. And VIA's own published results show that they saved practically nothing when they reduced the service in 2012. Revenues and ridership dropped far more

than costs, just as we had predicted."

Greg Gormick quotes research conducted for Amtrak in the US that shows a daily train has a public cost just marginally higher than a tri-weekly one, but offers more than double the level of service, optimizes use of equipment and human resources, and offers the best potential to build and sustain ridership.

"We're quite optimistic," Bartlett concluded. "Minister Garneau was among the opposition members of the last Parliament who voted unanimously in favour of a private member's VIA Rail bill that was ultimately defeated by the Conservative majority. We hope he will now move quickly, in the belief – to use the Prime Minister's words – that 'in Canada, better is always possible.'"

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'utilisateurs dont le but est de voir à l'avancement de l'intérêt public en matière de transport des personnes et des marchandises.

BUREAU NATIONAL OFFICE
211 Bronson Ave., Suite 308
Ottawa, ON K1R 6H5

MAILING ADDRESS
Box 858, Station B
Ottawa, ON K1P 5P9
613-594-3290
info@transport-action.ca
www.transport-action.ca

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

PRESIDENT Harry Gow
VICE-PRESIDENT EAST Marcus Garnet
VICE-PRESIDENT WEST Peter Lacey
TREASURER David Jeanes
SECRETARY Anton (Tony) Turritin
PAST PRESIDENT David Glastonbury
Follow us on

