

# TRANSPORT ACTION NEWSLETTER

Volume 37 no 2 — June 2016



## IN THIS ISSUE

### PRAIRIES



Last farewell  
Page 4

### MARITIME



Improvement in  
Halifax transit  
Page 3

### BC



Testing the new line  
Page 4

## CANADA TRANSPORTATION ACT REVIEW

# SHAPING THE FUTURE

*On February 25, 2016, the Minister of Transport tabled in Parliament the Canada Transportation Act (CTA) Review Report.*

*The Review was launched on June 25, 2014, and concluded on December 21, 2015 when it was submitted to the Minister of Transport by the Chair of the Review, the Honourable David Emerson, P.C., O.B.C.*

*The Review looked forward 20 to 30 years to identify priorities and potential actions in transportation that will support Canada's long-term economic well-being. The Report embodies many months of analytical work, significant public consultations and includes a number of recommendations.*

Transport Action's reaction is that this is an important report that deserves serious consideration by the Federal Government, with the exception of the ill-considered recommendations to remove the subsidy from the VIA Canadian, reduce its frequency and that of the Ocean in Atlantic Canada.

The Review offers a blueprint for TC and the new minister; it identifies priorities that should be addressed. While there are several recommendations we take issues with, our overall response is positive. TA has chosen to focus its response on Section 8.3 Passenger Rail and Chapter 9 Air Transport which are of the highest interest to our members. Here are the issues:

### RAIL

We strongly support Federal initiatives to reduce conflict in areas of high rail congestion between freight and rail passenger traffic and in the long term an investment in dedicated rail networks.

It is extremely important the Government of Canada act to improve the fluidity of rail network. We endorse use of federal legislative power and infrastructure funding.

The current budgetary allocation should be used to fund a high-level examination of the VIA Rail plan, driven by TC, with a reputable consultant, with input from provinces, freight railways and VIA.

We strongly oppose elimination of Toronto - Vancouver subsidies due to the very limited reach of the existing tourism operator (to upper-income guests and running from Vancouver to the Rockies only) and the patchwork service replacement that would be required on VIA rail.

We note the difficulty of separating remote and intercity services from the tourism service. The perfect example is The Canadian versus The Rocky Mountaineer. The first one is in service year round, serves many remote locations and is coast to coast while the second is oriented exclusively to high-end tourists.

Continue on page 2

Transport Action Canada strongly supports a feasibility study of a dedicated Montreal - Toronto corridor. This should be a Federal Government led initiative. Participants to include the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, VIA, the freight railways, with significant outside engineering and market expertise. Impact on highway congestion and competitive modes (Intercity Bus and Air) to be included.

We strongly encourages continuing financial support for the Montreal - Halifax service including efforts to reinstate daily service as means of making the service substantially more effective than the present tri-weekly operation.

Tri-weekly service actually worsened the financial situation of the Maritime service: half the numbers of passengers without a proportionate reduction in fixed costs.

We recognize a need to strengthen the passenger rail policy framework to avoid VIA Rail having to survive continually on razor thin annual appropriations. This framework once effectively implemented should lead to a VIA Rail Act giving the corporation a legitimate standing.

We emphasise the need for a legislative framework, and refer to the recent Auditor General's report. We emphasize the need for a legislative framework, and refer to the recent Auditor General's report. TAC continues to urge the adoption of a VIA rail Act in Parliament with powers similar to those enjoyed by Amtrak.

Governments need to work together; - in particular, collaboration between Ottawa and Ontario, in view of GO's operations west of Toronto and proposed provincially-supported high-speed rail is needed. To some extent this collaboration should extend to municipal governments.

There is a need to define route lengths for commuter versus inter-city rail; some of the former are seen by TAC to be unnecessarily duplicative of VIA Rail (outer parts of Niagara Falls and Kitchener GO lines may be such).

The access to a key node of VIA Rail services, Toronto Union Station, is being limited following the takeover of the Station and trackage by Metrolinx, with VIA restricted to three platforms, and Go Transit wanting this to be further reduced.

## **AIR TRANSPORT**

We substantially support the Review in relation to airport administration, airport security and consumer protection.

Chapter 9 of the Review (ref a) treats Air Transport which it describes as a "system based on competition, market forces and user pay". Transport Canada which has evolved into a policy-making and regulatory body is the landlord to some 22 larger airports, known as the National Airport System (NAS) operated by "not-for-profit" Airport Authorities. These Authorities are responsible to Transport Canada, under lease, for maintenance and improvements to their facilities. On termination of the lease, extensions are possible, the facilities are to be returned to the government.

Several quotes from the Review illustrate the current situation:

"Canada is unique amongst competitors in charging onerous rents and taxes that undermine competitiveness. Airport rents, for example, can represent up to 30% of airport operating, far more than would be expected in dividends and income tax from a private, for-profit airport, such as those in Europe";

"Security charges of up to \$25 per passenger have exceeded the cost of security screening by an average of 18% every year since 2010-2011 and fail to recognize the national interest in a secure system";

"Airport authorities in the NAS bear the additional burden of having to make payments to their municipalities in lieu-of-taxes. These payments can be substantial – and there is no requirement that they be aligned with property taxes levied against comparable industrial sites in those jurisdictions";

"The World Economic Forum ranks Canadian airports among the best in the world or infrastructure quality (16th) but 135th for cost".



We urge the abolition of the current airport lease payments and recommend that Transport Canada must devote other resources to maintain the smaller airports, and identify where the money is going to come from for the airports in the system beyond those 22 covered by the agreement, assuming that some of the money earned by TC/government from the 22 goes to supporting them. As these are generally those in more isolated areas (remote usually) loss of support for them would likely further erode their ability to exist. We owe a debt to some of those areas, with them supporting indigenous peoples, resource exploitation and even as a supply of basic training for commercial pilots (bush pilots). If there is indeed a cross-subsidy we would urge the Government to continue to subvene regional and remote airports from normal Federal resources derived from the Consolidated Revenue Fund. If that proves impossible, the lease payment should be reduced to the strict amount needed for the cross-subsidy only.

For further details : [www.tc.gc.ca/eng/ctareview2014/canada-transportation-act-review.html](http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/ctareview2014/canada-transportation-act-review.html)

## **TAC - ELECTRONIC OR PAPER ?**

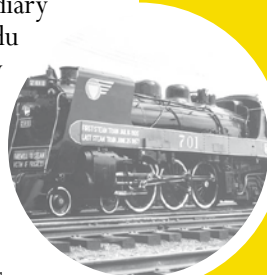
Transport Action needs to update its communication methods with members. We want to shift to a shorter, more frequent and current, electronic format, limiting mailed copies. Mailing costs have risen significantly. While we understand that some members do not have e-mail, we need your cooperation in making this transition. We would appreciate members informing us on their preference. If you don't now receive the Newsletter electronically, please send us a brief e-mail (or phone message 613-594-3290) stating that you will accept electronic newsletters in the future, or that you definitely need a paper copy to: [info@transportaction.ca](mailto:info@transportaction.ca)



## Proposal for a new rail network in Montréal

Proposals for the development of a 67 km automated metro separate from the existing metro in Montréal have been unveiled by CDPQ Infra, a subsidiary of public pension and insurance investor Caisse de dépôt et placement du Québec that was established last year to study infrastructure projects suggested by the provincial government.

CDPQ Infra said the 67 route-km double-track *Réseau électrique métropolitain* would be the third-largest automated network in the world, after Dubai's 80 km metro and Vancouver's 68 km system. There would be 24 fully-accessible and climate-controlled covered stations, with options for a further five stops. There would be a fleet of around 200 cars, each with a capacity of 150 passengers, running as two-car sets off-peak and four-car sets in the peaks. Services would run every six to 12 min from 05.00 to 01.00 seven days a week. The cost of the project is estimated at C\$5.5bn. It is envisaged that construction could begin in spring 2017, with the first trains in service towards the end of 2020. — *railwaygazette.com*



## FAST TRACK

### Did you know...

On June 24th, 1957, the last steam engine ran on the Ontario Northland Railway between Timmins and North Bay, ONT.

### And the number is...

# 400

The number of railway crossings that will be fixed or upgraded in Canada this year. An expense of 10.9 million

## Halifax transit improve real time information



Halifax Transit is replacing its GoTime system with a new service that gives information to passengers based on global positioning technology installed aboard each bus.

The \$43-million system is called the Departures Line.

Passengers can call a single phone number (902-480-8000) to access the system and a pre-recorded voice will guide the caller

through the process. The caller will enter the bus stop number — printed on each bus stop sign — to hear which buses are departing, and at what time, from their stop location. The new system will also allow Halifax Transit to track where each and every bus is located, how long before it reaches each stop, and when there is a need to plan for increased service hours.

Halifax Transit is replacing 2,500 bus stop signs over the coming months to reflect the new Departures Line contact number. — *metronews.ca*



"I hope that the government transforms its sunny ways into real action on VIA Rail. Safe, accessible, affordable, and sustainable passenger rail service is vital for London and area. Our economic future depends on it."

— Irene Mathyssen, MP London—Fanshawe

## Fare for low income patrons

A new pilot program in Moncton, Riverview and Dieppe is offering half-price or in some cases free bus rides to low-income residents.

The three communities have invested a total of \$22,000 to offer half-price transit passes to the United Way, the YMCA of Greater Moncton and the Food Depot.



The goal of the project is to eventually allow all agencies to apply directly through Codiac Transpo to be able to distribute bus passes.

So far 20,000 tickets have been made available and approximately 8,000 of those have been handed out.

— *www.cbc.ca*

# WOW

Sixty-three percent of Americans responding to an American Public Transportation Association (APTA) survey say they would use high-speed trains if they were available in the U.S., the organization announced yesterday.

## TA AGM in Toronto

# Changing point

*The latest AGM Held in Toronto on May 11th, 2016 was an opportunity for TA members to meet the new president, Mr Bruce Budd. Mr Budd has a long experience in public advocacy group and was a member of TA Ontario. Here's his word regarding the coming year.*

The members of Transport Action Canada elected a new board of directors including me as your new President. I'm very pleased with the board members chosen at that meeting – a combination of new and returning folks with the experience and energy to drive our organization forward.

In accepting these new responsibilities, I addressed the need to pressure VIA Rail and especially the new government to expand our passenger rail services not only in the Windsor Quebec City corridor, but also in Atlantic Canada and out in Western Canada where new local train services are needed to compliment the Canadian, our one remaining transcontinental train.

I also mentioned that we will push for better integration of trains with inter-city bus and local transit services. Additionally, we have many internal upgrades to our organization. This includes an im-



LEFT TO RIGHT: SCOTT ST. JOHN, DAVID JEANES, BRUCE BUDD, HOWARD LEVINE, ANTON TURRITIN, SCARLETT SHENG, PETER MIASEK, TED BARTLETT (BEHIND), JUSTIN PREST (FRONT), HARRY GOW, TIM HAYMAN.

mediate transformation of our website and how we communicate our initiatives to your our members and to all Canadians who support improved public transportation.

## News from TA BC

Transit Funding for Metro Vancouver:

Nothing definitive from the new federal government; Broadway Rapid Transit and Surrey LRT projects are in Phase 2; This entails narrowing costs to  $\pm 10\%$ ; Geo-technical testing along Broadway.

Evergreen Line:

Mark I car in use for testing completed portions; Some catch-up in construction schedule has been made. Planned opening spring 2017.



Downtown Bus Services Review:

Draft a letter to CoV and TransLink supporting proposal to make greater use of VAG's North Side plaza and continued 5-Robson through service.

No CoV response to letter supporting 24 hour bus lanes on Georgia St.

## Obituary

**PETER JOHN LACEY** Peter John Lacey of St. Vital died at home on May 10, 2016, at 68, after battling cancer and diabetes. Well-known among railway enthusiasts, he was a director, a volunteer, a supporter, and a contributor to the Winnipeg Railway Museum, as well as a member of Transport 2000 and other transportation-oriented organizations. Pete was born in Holbeach, Lincs., England, in 1947, coming to Saskatchewan in 1957. He lived in Sturgis, Lintlaw, Weyburn, and Regina, achieving a B.A in Math from the University of Saskatchewan (Regina Campus). He worked as a computer systems analyst for Univac Computers in Regina and Winnipeg. Later he also worked for the Red River Community College, and as a freelance online editor and writer. He wrote a regular column for The Lance as a community correspondent for St. Vital. Pete published two history books (a third was in the works) about small Manitoba railways, and a technical railway catalogue. Among his hobbies, Pete's activities included hiking, canoeing, and camping. He was very interested in wildlife and conservation. Predeceased by his parents, Dorothy (Wilcox) and Cyril Lacey, Pete is survived by his brothers Steve (Dawn) in Yellowknife, and Nige (Collette) in Calgary, and their children and grandchildren. Family and friends will miss his dry wit and larger than life personality. A memorial event will be announced in the near future. If you wish, please make donations in his name to the Winnipeg Railway Museum.

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PAST PRESIDENT Harry Gow  
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## Coming soon...

Transport 2000 Québec AGM to be held on June 7th in Montréal at Maison du développement durable de Montréal 50 rue Ste-Catherine Ouest) from 17h30 until 20h30  
info : info@transport2000qc.org



# Ottawa Upheavals: Late-breaking News

## Major Changes for Ottawa's Transit

**David Jeanes, director, former president and treasurer**

Ottawa Transit is mentioned whenever people talk of Bus Rapid Transit. With Curitiba, Brazil, the 1980's Transitway was worldwide BRT poster-child. Other innovations were bus route "interlining", where a bus took a different route on successive trips, to optimize bus utilization for one-way routes and large-scale use of double deckers on long-haul expresses. Over the same period, Ottawa became the last major city in Canada to have rail transit as a component of its transit or commuter network. Although the diesel O-Train started service in 2001, (with a significant involvement of the then Transport 2000), its 8 km route was not extended over the last 15 years, while the Transitway network was continuously enlarged.

Ottawa was an early implementer of monthly transit passes but continued to rely on cash and tickets for single fares. OC Transpo was late to the table with smart cards, using Presto cards from Metrolinx in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The National Capital's other transit system, Société des Transports de l'Outaouais, (STO), already had smart cards.

On June 7th, OC Transpo unveiled the largest set of changes ever to services, routes and fares, linked to the planned 2018 opening of the east-west Confederation Line rail transit. This was big news in Ottawa but was eclipsed two days later by a massive sinkhole that closed Rideau Street, one of Ottawa's main downtown transit arteries for both OC Transpo and STO.

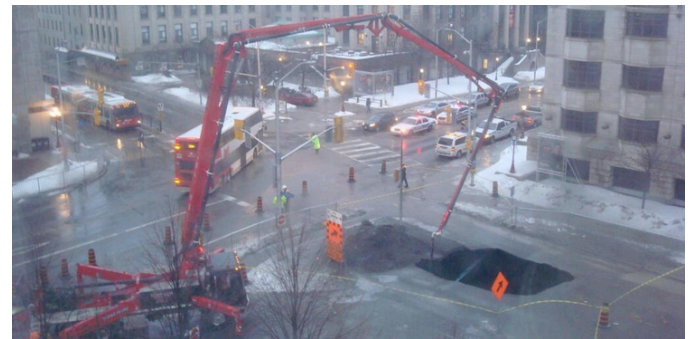
This happened directly above the final 50-metres of tunneling for the Confederation Line. The hole rapidly increased to the full width of the street, swallowing a locksmith's parked van and two pieces of construction equipment. The hole was adjacent to the excavation for escalators to the Rideau Station. Most fortunately, and surprisingly, there were no injuries or fatalities on the busy Rideau Street, though fully-loaded OC Transpo and STO buses had crossed the weakened section of the street only minutes before and others were about to cross.

Businesses were forced to close over a wide area due to safety concerns and loss of water, gas and electricity. Major hotels were also affected. Numerous Rideau Street OC Transpo routes and many STO routes have been diverted onto other already-busy streets and downtown Ottawa traffic, transit and pedestrian movements may remain disrupted for several weeks.

determined yet whether the cause is related to transit tunneling deep underground at the same location. It was later discovered that 300 meters of the tunnel had been flooded with water up to 2.5 metres deep. The immediate remedial action was to pump large amounts of concrete into the hole, to protect adjacent buildings and to give repair crews a working surface to reconnect water mains, gas lines, etc.

Only three days earlier the City had announced completion of the Rideau station cavern, a few metres east of the sinkhole. As has happened in the past, local media, including CBC Radio and Television, turned to Transport Action for independent comment on both of these breaking news stories.

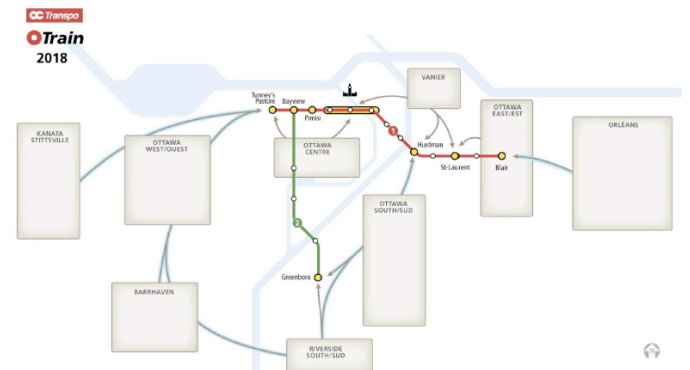
An earlier sinkhole was formed when Confederation Line tunneling started on Waller St. in 2014. Fortunately the buses had already been detoured around this site, which was under the Transitway.



## Finally a Rail-focussed Hub-and-Spoke Network

In 2006, before cancellation of the \$800 million North-South electric light rail project, Transport Action's local group, Friends of the O-Train, called for a "hub and spoke" network. The LRT would cross downtown on surface streets, as planned, but express and Transitway buses would terminate at large transfer stations in the west at Bayview and east at Hurdman.

The \$2.1 billion Confederation Line will cross downtown in a tunnel with transfer stations at Hurdman and Blair in the East and Tunneys Pasture, 1 km west of Bayview. Each of the major suburban areas shown in the diagram will have its buses feed one or two of the major rail transfer stations, including the existing diesel light rail Trillium Line.



## The End of Premium-Fare Express Buses

When the Confederation Line opens in 2018, Ottawa will cease to have premium fare limited stop direct to downtown peak hour bus routes. They will be replaced by peak-hour



Investigation of the cause of the sinkhole and related water main breaks and flooding will take some time, and it cannot be

"Connexion" routes at regular fares. To cover the revenue lost from express fares, all other users will see a fare increase of about 10%. Rail stations will be gated fare-paid zones, to maximize the capacity for transfers between bus and rail.



### No More Bus Route Interlining

Because very few bus routes will pass through downtown, the practice of interlining, which Ottawa pioneered, will cease. With interlining, a bus might switch to a different route from the other side of town on successive trips. Although this reduced deadheading of empty buses through downtown in peak hours and improved bus utilization, delays in one part of town could ripple through the entire network. Officials are predicting that the schedule reliability of Connexion routes and other routes feeding the Confederation Line will improve.

### What Happens to the Double Deckers?

Ottawa acquired a fleet of 75 doubledecker buses with a larger percentage of seated passengers in 2012, the first time they were used for urban transit in Canada, except for Victoria BC.



Split screen video monitoring showed the driver that passengers on the upper deck were seated. This led to driver distraction that contributed to one of the worst accidents in recent Canadian transit history in 2013 when a Transitway

doubledecker collided with a VIA Rail train. Five bus passengers and the driver died and many were injured.

With over 100 seats per bus and a shorter footprint than the articulated buses, these buses were intended to give most long-haul express riders a seat, and to increase the capacity for buses at congested downtown bus stops. The buses had limited headroom and longer dwell times to load and unload passengers. Presumably these buses will still mostly be used on the connexion routes, though many passengers will have to stand on the connecting trains into downtown.

### Elimination of Bus Tickets

For its entire existence since 1948, OC Transpo and its predecessor, the Ottawa Transportation Commission, have relied on tickets for single fares, with a significant saving over cash fares. Ottawa was late to introduce an electronic payment card, but now Presto, provided by the Ontario Government's Metrolinx agency, will become the main way to pay all fares. Tickets will be discontinued but there is still discussion of how social service agencies will be able to provide single



transit fares to the needy and what will replace paper transfers from Gatineau's STO buses. There have recently been concerns about a much higher fare percentage demanded by Metrolinx for processing OC Transpo's electronic fare payments, but it was not explained how this related to the new fare levels.

(Images used in this issue are from the City of Ottawa, OC Transpo, and CBC).

### Final Issue of Transport Action Harry Gow, past president and founding president

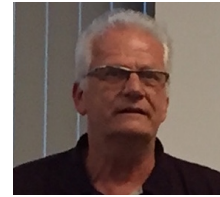
The new Board of Transport Action Canada, elected at the Annual General Meeting in Toronto, has decided that this will be last issue of *Transport Action* in its present format, and that more frequent, shorter bulletins will be issued to keep readers informed on a more up-to-date basis. For thirty-seven years this newsletter has been produced for members and others by a succession of editors, with the help of a team of volunteers. In recent years Harry Gow, David and Helga Jeanes, Ted Bartlett and the late Bert Titcomb have been the mainstays, with Luc Côté doing layout and artwork in Longueuil, Québec. Transport Action Canada wishes to thank these people as well as the contributors from across the country who have sent in news and analysis from their regions for all these years.





## TRANSPORT ACTION CANADA

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Bruce Budd, President

Toronto, June 1st, 2016

### We need your help to save Intercity Passenger Rail in Canada

Dear member/supporter,

As your new President I'm pleased to report that your Board has taken several actions to improve service to members and to inject new life into our Ottawa office. Jointly with Transport Action Ontario, our Ontario affiliate, we hired a part-time contract Operations Manager, Justin Prest, who is already producing results. Visit our revamped website at [www.transportaction.ca](http://www.transportaction.ca) to see an example of his work. But all of this costs money, and we urgently need your help to continue the momentum.

More good news: a long time member has offered to **match every donation we receive by Canada Day, July 1<sup>st</sup> up to \$5,000.** Please respond to this member's challenge! I'm asking you to make a special "Rebuilding Donation" right now. Donations of any amount are welcome and will receive a tax receipt. I am pleased to report that Peter Miasek, Ontario President, Tony Turriffin, TAC Secretary, and I have already pledged \$500 each.

The very existence of intercity passenger trains in Canada is facing a serious threat across the entire country. The Emerson Report (a review of the Canada Transportation Act commissioned by the previous Federal Government) proposed eliminating all subsidies to VIA's *Canadian*, and reducing its service to *once a week*. We simply can't allow them to kill any chance of rebuilding a viable train network in Western Canada.

Service in Atlantic Canada may also be reduced with the *Ocean* cut to twice weekly. In Southern Ontario, VIA has been unable to deliver on service improvements promised last year. In Northern Ontario, serious service cuts made in the past few years have not been rectified, and the potential loss of the *Canadian* would further reduce service. We continue to fight for the return of the *Northlander*.

The recent VIA 2016 – 2020 Corporate Plan paints an extremely gloomy picture – stating that "VIA Rail is at a critical decision point" and "Left unchanged, VIA Rail will be unable to fulfil its mandate".

At a time of great concern about climate change, this country *needs more, not less*, public transportation to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Intercity passenger trains also fight traffic congestion in densely-populated regions and provide badly needed travel alternatives to those Canadians who are unable, or choose not to drive or fly.

Transport Action Canada needs your help *now* to fight for better train service. We must build on National Dream Renewed and its offshoots. This may be our last chance to make a dent in the car-and-plane mentality that afflicts the federal government and its bureaucracy.

We *must* campaign for *more*, not *less*, train service. Your support is urgently needed by July 1<sup>st</sup>. Please send your cheque payable to **Transport Action Canada** in the enclosed mail-back envelope.

Bruce Budd, President  
[bruce@transportaction.ca](mailto:bruce@transportaction.ca)

This campaign is endorsed by:

Harry Gow, founder and immediate Past-President – Transport Action Canada  
Ted Bartlett, President – Transport Action Atlantic  
Peter Miasek, President – Transport Action Ontario

# Yes! I'd like to donate!

Please fill out the form below to make your donation or head on over to [www.transportaction.ca/donate/](http://www.transportaction.ca/donate/) to donate online.

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