



TRANSPORT ACTION CANADA

VIA President in Halifax, discusses plans for the Maritimes

By Tim Hayman, TAA

VIA Rail President and CEO Yves Desjardins-Siciliano was in Halifax on January 31, 2017 to deliver a talk to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce. Billed as "VIA Rail's vision in the Maritimes", Desjardins-Siciliano addressed a full banquet hall during a luncheon at the Westin Nova Scotian.

The talk addressed VIA's plans for the Maritimes, which are essentially two-fold: the anticipated launch of daily regional train services between Campbellton and Moncton and Moncton and Halifax, and the exploration of commuter rail possibilities in the city of Halifax.

It also delved into VIA's broader goals at the moment, which include seeking funding for a new fleet and dedicated tracks in the Quebec City-Windsor Corridor. Though this doesn't directly affect the Maritimes, Desjardins-Siciliano reiterated the mantra that what's good for the Corridor is good for the rest of the system. If VIA can generate additional revenue from that operation, they can use it to add new services and expand their offerings throughout the country. The president has stated on several occasions that the ability to look at launching new regional services in the Maritimes is the result of positive returns in the Corridor in recent years, which have freed up additional funds.

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VIA reports positive holiday ridership

By Tim Hayman, TAA

VIA Rail is reporting positive results from the 2016-2017 Christmas/New Year's holiday season. VIA issued a press release on Jan. 12 claiming "record" results, though it's admittedly not at all clear what their frame of reference is to declare these records (best numbers ever? In the past decade? In the past 5 years?)

Putting aside the hyperbole, the message is still a positive one. VIA has been promoting their trains as an ideal way to travel at that time of year (in



A pair of VIA Rail RDCs, similar to those proposed for regional services in the region. Photo by Tim Hayman



A pair of Ocean train sets in Halifax just before Christmas. Extra departures for the holidays meant this sight was once again

particular), and more people seem to be getting that message.

*common for a couple weeks.
Photo by im Hayman*

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Canada Line and Snow

By Rick Jel fs, TABC

TransLink's Canada Line experienced two major shutdowns (Feb 3 / 6, 2017). The cause was the apparent inability of trains to travel northbound between Bridgeport and Marine Drive Stations.

These incidents are a reminder of a similar incident in November 2010 when an early winter snow storm led to service disruptions in the same location. At that time, Transport Action BC engaged with TransLink over the incident because we felt that the Canada Line's private operator (InTransitBC / Protrans) should have been better prepared for such storms, which are not unknown in Vancouver.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

Best practice in Austria

By Ken Westcar, TAO

Not many people will have heard or been to Gmunde in Austria, a town of about 5,000 residents nestled just under the Czech border and about 170km from Vienna. It's home to a wide variety of small industries and a heritage, narrow gauge railway that's popular with international tourists.



In North America, any thought of providing regular passenger services to such a small community would be laughed at. Why bother when people can just drive or catch the bus? Although Austria has lifted many rural, standard gauge lines as part of a capital reallocation process that emphasizes higher-density and fast, intercity services, the rails through Gmunde have stayed firmly in place. Why, because they help balance Austria's transportation system to keep its value-added industries thriving and minimise absolute dependency on highways.

Gmunde has recently modernised its station with platforms serving two passenger lines and a side track for freight services. It's unmanned but the ticket machines are easy to use and a simple fare structure avoids the usual "whack-a-mole" pricing used in other countries. Euros 26.50 (about \$32) buys a standard class ticket to downtown Vienna. It's also valid to your final destination in Vienna's "kernel" or downtown core transit fare zone.

A bi-level, bi-directional, electrically hauled train departs every 2hrs. It's not busy and the conductor speaks some English. Several rural stations are served en-route Vienna and the train gradually fills until about 50km outside the city when it then runs express to Franz-Joseph Bahnhof where trams, subways and buses provide seamless city access.

Clearly the Austrians have carefully balanced the rail/highway subsidy equation very well by looking at the big picture. An underlying theme is respect for people, the dignity of mobility options and the positive economic and environmental benefits.

Paris mayor has plan to restrict cars and pedestrianize city centre

By Tony Turriffin, TAO

News story by Kim Willsher in the Guardian 8 January 2017. It started with closure of a stretch of highway on the left bank of the Seine, then this summer along the right bank, efforts to reduce automobile use inside Paris. Then in December, Paris suffered a series of severe smog days, the worst in a decade. As an emergency response, car use was curtailed based on whether one's license plate number was even or odd. Public transit was temporarily made

free. Now Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo wants to continue cutting private car use in half reclaiming public space for pedestrians, cyclists, and other non-polluting means of transport including electric cars and scooters.

In pedestrianized areas only cars of local dwellers, the police and other emergency services, and delivery vehicles will be allowed. In her New Year's message to the city Hidalgo said "The deluge is imminent and we cannot wait for it to sweep us all away...there are too many cars in Paris." Paris has extensive public transit and more electric tramways will be added. Drivers organizations have complained about road closures claiming they lead to greater traffic jam and more pollution. Police have said they may reopen roads if there are long-term congestion problems, but the mayor is insisting the road closures are permanent. "We say clearly that our aim is the significant reduction in car traffic, as all the world's large cities are doing," Hidalgo said, adding "We must constantly remind people: the fewer cars there are, the less pollution there is," France is aggressively building light rail transit in cities with as little as 100,000 in population. It has high levels of car use in suburban areas, and its elaborate network of tolled super-highways have seriously impacted train use including ridership on TGV trains.

NEW OFFICE SPACE

This month, Transport Action Canada will be downsizing its physical office space, in order to save money and better serve you. We will remain within the Bronson Centre, as we have for the past few years, however we will be moving from the third floor to the second floor. We look forward to giving you more details about our transition to our new office space in the next monthly e-blast.

Our contact information, however, will remain the same.

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TransLink Fares and Transit Fare Review

By Rick Jelfs, TABC

TransLink is into Phase 2 (Define) of its Transit Fare Review. An on-line survey is available until Feb. 17 [here](#).

Stephen Rees' blog discussed a recent Stakeholders' forum on the Fare Review [here](#). He provides insight into how the Stakeholders' fora are organised and run. TransLink plans to run one or two Stakeholders' fora in each Phase of the Fare Policy Review process ((Phase 3 Develop) and Phase 4 (Deliver)).

Stephen points out TransLink, surprisingly in my opinion, didn't release any Compass generated data to the stakeholders. The reasons given were difficulties analysing the data (due to the volume?) and privacy concerns related to collecting data on linked (multi-mode) trips. The latter issue is off-putting as the [Compass Card privacy statement](#) clearly states that only "anonymous and aggregated travel data" will be used for planning purposes. One has to wonder what it is about linked trips that causes a privacy issue that doesn't apply to unlinked trips? Hopefully these data issues are resolved for future Stakeholders' fora.

Another of Stephen's blog postings provides information on how TransLink's fares compare with other systems around the globe. According to a French/German "on-line moving platform" company study, TransLink's monthly fare costs rank 31st out of the 89 cities studied. By comparison, Toronto is the 5th most expensive city for monthly transit costs (Montreal was not included in the study). The blog post is [here](#).

Fare-by-distance is top of mind in much of the discussion on changing TransLink's Fare Policy as it seems the most rationale and fits the economic paradigm that the more one uses of a

good or service, the more one should pay. Two commentators have taken issue with fare-by-distance.

Voony's blog argues that it may be sensible for rapid transit lines whereby the fare to be paid can be clearly understood from information on ticket vending machines at entry. But this is not feasible on bus routes - particularly those that wander around, a common occurrence, particularly on suburban routes. Read the post [here](#).

SFU Urban Studies Professor Anthony Perl argues that fare-by-distance transit fares should only be considered when fare-by-distance charges also apply to road users. He feels that higher long distance transit fares will drive more people to drive and increase suburban sprawl unless there is a concurrent introduction of road pricing. Without direct road pricing, users are basing their home purchase and travel decisions on incomplete information about the real, total cost of that travel. Read more [here](#).

12^e Déjeuner-bénéfice de l'association Transport 2000 Québec : « Pour une mobilité efficace des citoyens d'aujourd'hui et de demain »

Trois récipiendaires des Prix Guy-Chartrand pour célébrer leur contribution au développement des transports collectifs

Soumis par Harry Gow, TAC

Montréal, le 6 février 2017 - À l'occasion de son 12^e déjeuner-bénéfice annuel, l'association Transport 2000 Québec a décerné trois Prix Guy-Chartrand et un Prix du Président qui visent à reconnaître la contribution d'organisations ou de personnes aux réalisations exceptionnelles dans le domaine des transports collectifs. Le déjeuner de cette année se tenait sous le thème « Pour une mobilité efficace des citoyens d'aujourd'hui et de demain ».

Dans la catégorie Action et mobilisation des usagers, le lauréat est le Comité de transport communautaire de Gatineau. Ce Comité est composé de plus de 50 organismes communautaires et est soutenu par le Centre intégré de santé et de services sociaux de l'Outaouais, la Ville de Gatineau et le ministère des Transports du Québec (MTMDET). Son travail concerté, sa persévérance et sa rigueur dans la préparation de son projet de transport a permis au Comité de proposer un modèle innovant et complémentaire au réseau existant permettant ainsi d'accroître la mobilité des citoyens les plus vulnérables.

Dans la catégorie Développement et amélioration des transports collectifs, le lauréat est monsieur Jonathan Lapierre de la municipalité des Îles-de-la-Madeleine. M. Lapierre a contribué à mettre en place un réseau de transport collectif régional, le RÉGÎM, en obtenant l'appui des acteurs de la communauté en concertation avec les élus de tout le territoire. Le dynamisme, la volonté de changement et l'engagement personnel de M. Lapierre en tant que maire ont permis l'amélioration et la diversification de l'offre de transport collectif dans un contexte de désengagement de certains acteurs majeurs des transports interurbains et sur un territoire très étendu.

Dans la catégorie Personnalité marquante du domaine des transports collectifs, le lauréat est monsieur Benoît Robert de Communauto. Au cours des 20 dernières années, M. Benoît Robert a contribué à travers Communauto et en collaboration avec son équipe à l'évolution du concept de mobilité durable et à la complémentarité de l'automobile avec les réseaux de transport en commun dans le cocktail transport. De par son leadership, son implication sociale et sa volonté de créer des liens avec tous les partenaires

du transport, M. Robert a grandement favorisé l'utilisation du transport collectif pour les usagers de Communauto.

Ces prix ont été remis grâce à une commandite OR souscrite par l'AMT, en présence de sa présidente-directrice générale par intérim, Marieke Tremblay, du président du comité d'honneur, premier vice-président, Infrastructures, et président et chef de la direction, CDPQ Infra, monsieur Macky Tall, du conférencier d'honneur, le président du Comité de transition pour la mise en oeuvre du projet de loi 76, monsieur Paul Côté, et du président de Transport 2000 Québec, monsieur François Pepin. Le déjeuner-bénéfice s'est tenu à Montréal en présence de près de 400 convives, élus, partenaires et professionnels du monde de la mobilité durable.

Enfin, un Prix spécial du Président a été décerné par monsieur François Pepin à l'Agence métropolitaine de transport (AMT) pour souligner sa contribution exceptionnelle au transport collectif depuis sa création en 1996. Au cours de ces vingt années d'existence, l'AMT a grandement amélioré le transport collectif dans la région de Montréal au niveau de l'intégration tarifaire, du développement des trains de banlieue, des stationnements incitatifs et des voies réservées.

Les photos de la remise seront disponibles sur la page www.facebook.com/Transport2000Qc/

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