



AGM NOTICE! Save the date! (Ottawa-Gatineau 2017)

The next Transport Action Canada Annual General Meeting will take place on May 6 and 7, 2017 in Ottawa, Ontario and Gatineau, Québec.

We are working on a hotel room deal. More details on how to take advantage of that deal will be forthcoming.

More details to come soon, so keep an eye on your inbox! Come join us for a tour of the Ottawa Confederation Line LRT project!

More details coming soon! (Don't forget to RSVP on the next email!)

The AGM is going to cost us a little bit of money, given that we want to question the Ottawa LRT group and visit the site. If you'd can and would like to contribute to making the AGM possible, [please do so NOW by clicking here!](#) Your donation is 100% tax receiptable.

NOTE: You must be a member in good standing of Transport Action Canada (or one of its 4 affiliate organizations: Atlantic, British Columbia, Ontario, or Prairie) in order to attend and vote at the AGM. If you are not a member or have not yet renewed, please do so now by [clicking here!](#)

SAVE AMTRAK

By Harry Gow, TAC

The creation of VIA Rail in the late 1970s was inspired by the earlier creation of the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) earlier in the decade, to unburden America's freight railways for the public service obligation to carry passengers. This save the railroads hundreds of millions of dollars, and along with economic (rate) deregulation under the Staggers Act, allowed them to recover from a long slump that started in the 1950s. VIA was not and is not a copy of Amtrak, however, and many features of the US passenger train company (such as accountability to elected representatives) are lacking in VIA's makeup.

Amtrak has problems of its own, arising in part from constant sniping from lobbies of competitors and attempts at micro-management by Congress. It also has a number of accomplishments, including a rising customer base and attractive, frequent long-distance train services such as the Empire Builder from Chicago to Seattle linking to Vancouver B C with the popular Cascades Talgo trains.

Now the Trump Administration's proposed budget would have all funding withdrawn from such long-distance trains, leaving many communities with no public transport, and removing one of the more attractive ways for Americans and tourists to move about America. For the Canadian Government's budget cutters in Ottawa, the Trump budget could well create some envy, and a desire to cut VIA services once again, with trains like the Canadian and the Ocean targets in a 1990-style hit list. We can help prevent this unfortunate scenario from developing.

Transport Action Canada's President, Bruce Budd, is asking supporters of rail passenger services to write the US Secretary of Transportation to voice support for Amtrak. Look up the Department of Transportation's web site: www.transportation.gov/contact-us/

and send a message supporting full funding for the entire Amtrak network, stating why you wish the long-distance trains to continue to serve the country and provide the safe, comfortable travel that Americans and visitors need. Bruce hopes you will accede to his request, and thanks you in advance for your taking action to Save Amtrak.

Visit Our Website

Massey Bridge Machinations

By Rick Jelfs, TABC

The B.C. government's project to replace the George Massey Tunnel, south of Vancouver, with a mega-bridge continues to generate controversy. Two significant news items were recently published.

B.C.'s online news organisation, The Tyee, published a pair of articles on the proposed bridge. They are part of The Tyee's pre-election coverage for the May provincial election.

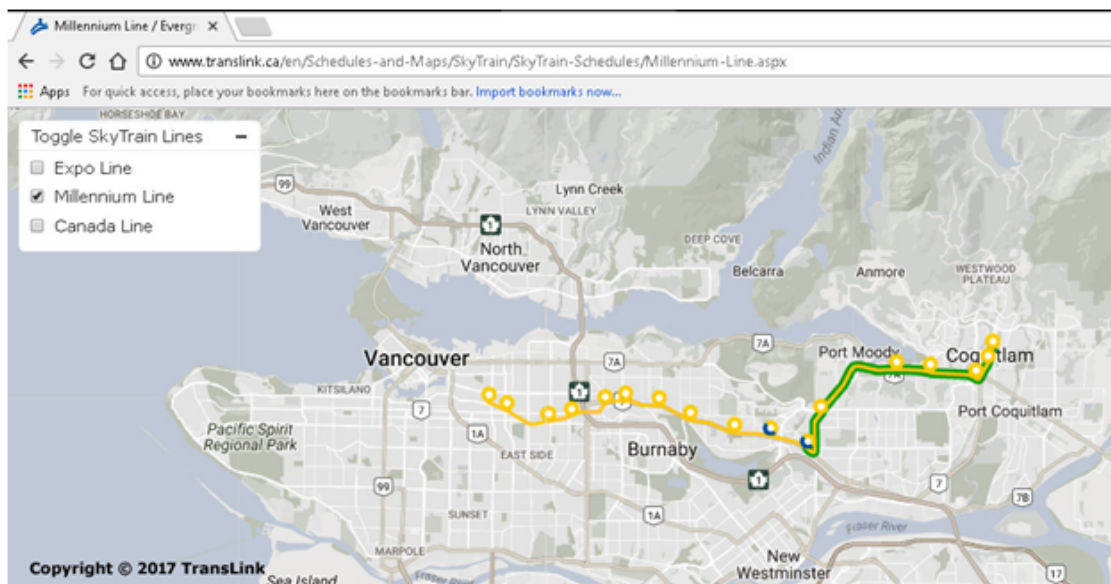
The first article ("How B.C. Taxpayers Ended Up Paying for the \$3.5-billion Massey Bridge") is a useful summary of how we got to a 10-lane bridge proposal. The province claims a bridge is necessary to relieve congestion and provide a seismically-safe alternative to the tunnel. However, this article's back story is that the proposal resulted from Port Metro Vancouver's [PMV] desire to allow deeper-draft ships into the Fraser River, to serve PMV's and private sector port and industrial facilities. The existing tunnel limits draft to 11.5 metres, whereas PMV desires drafts of 15.5 to 18.5 metres, depending on the life span of the tunnel's replacement.

[READ MORE HERE](#)

TransLink's new SkyTrain extension logged 30,000 trips in January

By Rick Jelfs, TABC

Vancouver's latest rapid transit service started on December 2, 2016. The 11 kilometre extension to the existing Millennium Line - it is marketed as the "Millennium Line - Evergreen Extension" serves Metro Vancouver's Tri-Cities area (Port Moody and the Coquitlams).



The design-build project was managed and built by the province and handed over to TransLink when substantially complete. It is operated by TransLink's BC Rapid Transit Company subsidiary.

The line operates in tunnel, on surface and on elevated structures. The 2.1 km tunnel section is a single-bore, double track design with extensive 6% grades. Sinkholes developed in some sections during the tunnel-boring process.

The line's 6 stations all feature up and down escalators, a first for SkyTrain stations. Public art is integrated in the project. Station platforms are 80 metres long, consistent with the other Expo/Millennium Line stations. They can handle 6-car Mark 1, 4-car Mark 2/3 or future 5-car Mark X trains. A 5-car train would have all doors on the platform but the "cabs" could overhang platform ends.

Current service is integrated with the existing Millennium Line to VCC/Clark station. Service is provided by 2-car, Mark 2 trains with an average, peak hour headway of 3:20. Service overlaps with Expo Line service between Lougheed and Production Way-University stations.

There has been some crowding, particularly on the pre-existing part of the Millennium Line, due to the effects of delays and the uneven headway required to accommodate track sharing with the Expo Line through the two common stations.

Weekday, average ridership on the Evergreen Extension has reached ~30,000 boardings based on Compass Card fare gate "taps". Weekday ridership was forecast to reach 70,000 in 2021, although the supporting rationale for this number was questioned by the provincial Auditor-General.

The Mark 2 cars used in Millennium-Evergreen line service were supplied by Bombardier in the early 2000's and built in BC and Ontario. A nominal 260 passenger capacity per train (seats plus standees at 4 per sq. metre) creates a capacity of 4,680 passengers per hour per direction (pphpd).

The seven, 4-car Mark 3 trains ordered coincident with the Evergreen project operate on the Expo Line as it has a much higher demand and capacity requirement - up to about 16,000 pphpd in the morning peak. These additional cars were just enough to offset the addition of the extension. These cars were built by Bombardier in Plattsburgh, NY.



A Mark 2 train enters the LaFarge Lake-Douglas terminal station on the newly opened Evergreen Line Extension of Vancouver's SkyTrain system. The station is 24 kilometres due east of downtown Vancouver. The Coquitlam City Centre towers indicate that much development anticipated the line's arrival.

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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Links we found interesting

[Transit safety boss considers ban on headphones near LRT stations](#)

[Cinq raisons de se méfier du projet de REM à Montréal](#)

[Ottawa approves next stage of LRT work, wants to speed up link to Gatineau](#)

[Metrolinx and Bombardier: Put the focus back on the people of Ontario](#)

[Metro Line LRT running at full speed: so far so good](#)

Next Newsletter Preview:

In the National Capital Region, there's a real need for interprovincial, intercity, and federal cooperation and coordination. We'll go into the history of trying to get Ottawa and Gatineau connected, examine the issues that have been raised in the past and look to what we hope to accomplish in the future.

[Sign up others so they don't miss this exclusive story!](#)



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