



TRANSPORT ACTION CANADA

Dear ,

As our national AGM approaches next week, Transport Action members across the country have been hard at work, advocating on issues from Newfoundland ferry rates to Toronto subways. We hope you enjoy this extended edition of our newsletter.

Reminder: Transport Action Canada AGM

Our annual general meeting will be held on Saturday, 25 May, at the Bronson Centre in Ottawa, starting at 1 pm.

Our guest speaker will be **The Hon. David M. Collenette, PC**, former Federal Minister of Transport, Defence and Veterans Affairs, Chair of the Mayor of Ottawa's Task Force on Transportation, and Ontario Special Advisor for High Speed Rail.



[Click here full details and directions](#)

TAA Presents 2019 John Pearce Award



Mike Cassidy, president and owner of Maritime Bus, (left) accepts the John Pearce Award for 2019 from TAA president Ted Bartlett

Transport Action Atlantic has selected Mike Cassidy, president and owner of Maritime Bus, as the the recipient of the 2019 John Pearce Award, in recognition of his determined efforts to rescue and maintain scheduled intercity motorcoach service in the Maritimes.

In the fall of 2012, his company stepped in where others had failed, and is now in its seventh year of successful passenger and parcel operation, serving most towns and cities in the region on a daily basis and providing onward connections to Quebec and Ontario.

The citation also noted his success in providing urban transit in Charlottetown PEI, and his ongoing advocacy seeking government support for a national bus network, following the withdrawal of Greyhound from western Canada.

NL ferry rate concerns aired before parliamentary committee

There's been more progress in the campaign for fair and reasonable ferry rates between Cape Breton and Newfoundland. Town of Channel-Port aux Basques pressed the case before the House of Commons Standing Committee on Transportation on May 14. Mayor John Spencer, who's been in regular contact with **Transport Action Atlantic** in recent months, was delighted at the opportunity.

[Read More](#)

Ontario AGM Presentation - On-Demand Last-Mile Transit

Good transit that everyone can use builds strong and inclusive communities, and connects people with inter-city rail and bus services, but only a few cities in Canada can claim to offer an adequate service. Smaller cities, suburbs, and rural communities are almost universally underserved, and many municipalities are starting to ask whether new technology and new service models can close this gap.

However, many dynamic transit pilot projects across North America have been dogged by high costs and low passenger numbers. Belleville has avoided this, serving 300% more passengers each night in just six months, and improving cost recovery dramatically.

Transport Action Ontario invited Jeremy Eves from Pantonium, the Toronto software company behind this success, to speak at their AGM on May 4th, sharing with us how they did it, and how this could be replicated by other communities.

You can watch the presentation online:



Note: This is the first time we've had a guest presentation. We're looking for volunteers to do the recording and editing, we're hoping to use this to bring more of the meetings we hold to all our members across the country. Can you help us with recording or editing? Let us know.

Ontario Northland Passenger Rail and Bus Progress

Ontario Northland has been asked to come up with a plan to restore passenger rail service to Northern Ontario.

The plan will highlight what the service needs to look like, the funding requirements and the implementation timeline. The plan is expected to be released in November.

[Read more](#)



Rail and Bus Policy Shift for Southwestern Ontario

Ontario's Budget 2019 confirmed a major policy shift for Southwestern Ontario. The Province has paused capital funding for High Speed Rail and is actively exploring opportunities to enhance train speeds and service levels on existing railway corridors, as well as opportunities for inter-community bus services or other transit solutions that better support the immediate needs of SW Ontario. A transportation plan will be brought forward by fall 2019.

Transport Action Ontario strongly supports this new approach. We have long advocated for High Performance Rail - incremental improvement of passenger rail service on existing corridors, plus improved bus feeder service. We look forward to the public consultation process that forms part of the new plan development.

For further details, [consult the TAO website](#).

Ontario Changes Toronto Subway Plans and Legislation

Ontario's Budget also laid out plans for an expansion the Toronto subway network by constructing the downtown relief line, now to be known as the **Ontario Line**, extending the Yonge Subway to Richmond Hill, building a three-stop version of the Scarborough subway extension, and the Eglinton West LRT extension, largely underground). The province has committed \$11bn in funding, with the balance of \$17bn requested from the federal government and municipalities. **Transport Action Ontario** has long supported the Ontario Line and the Yonge Subway Extension, but has misgivings about the cost-effectiveness of the other two projects.

The Ontario government has also introduced the "Getting Ontario Moving Act", which makes numerous amendments to other Provincial Acts. Most importantly, changes are planned to the Metrolinx Act that will enable the province to prescribe rapid transit project design, development or construction as the sole responsibility of Metrolinx through regulation, and to prohibit further action on that project by the City of Toronto. The province will also be allowed to assume assets "with or without" compensation or recourse by the City.

The changes in this legislation are limited to the City of Toronto and its agencies. However, these proposed provisions could set a wider precedent for the provincial government assumes municipal assets without fair compensation.

Stay tuned for more developments in the upcoming months.

Farewell Yves Desjardins-Siciliano

After five years at the throttle, May 8th marked Yves Desjardins-Siciliano's last day as President and CEO of VIA Rail Canada. We have appreciated Yves' outreach to communities across the country, and to advocacy organisations like ourselves, and his openness about the challenges facing VIA Rail.

Yves Desjardins-Siciliano leaves on a high note, having secured the procurement of 32 new trains to replace the aging and failing LRC fleet in the Quebec-Windsor corridor, and posted five years of improving passenger ridership and financial performance, thanks in part to an increase in frequencies particularly between Toronto and Ottawa, and much work behind the scenes to improve marketing, customer service, and fleet utilization.

However, we'd be the first to tell you that there's a lot of work still to do - the Ocean still lacks daily service and is short of equipment; the Canadian's schedule remains a work of fiction thanks to freight congestion; Vancouver Island and Gaspé services are yet to be restored; the High Frequency Rail proposal awaits a decision; and large areas of the country lack public transportation of any sort - which require political will to resolve. We need to continually be reminding our MPs and Transport Canada about these issues to ensure that VIA Rail's leadership and Cynthia Garneau, the incoming President and CEO, get the support they urgently need to continue growing ridership and improve services across the national network.



Upcoming Meetings

Trajectoire Quebec AGM

Our sister organization, Trajectoire Quebec, will hold its 2019 annual general meeting in Montreal on June 6th, including a panel discussion on *Intelligent mobility: integrating autonomous urban shuttles*.

For full details: <https://trajectoire.quebec/evenement/AGA2019-conference>

Transportation Newsround

Expand REM to Laval, St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Highway 25: Quebec government

<https://globalnews.ca/news/5246495/rem-expansion-laval-st-jean-sur-richelieu/>

Ontario Tories claim restoring the Northlander is hard ...

<https://www.mywestnipissingnow.com/29636/fedeli-says-tories-remain-committed-to-restoring-rail-passenger-service/>

... while making it harder to deliver.

<https://www.baytoday.ca/local-news/layoffs-at-ontario-northland-1431676>

New Flyer exploring driver assist, and ultimately driverless buses

<https://winnipeg.ctvnews.ca/winnipeg-based-bus-manufacturer-launching-driverless-technology-program-1.4411584>

Calgary Launching On-Demand Transit Pilot

<http://www.calgarytransit.com/news/calgary-transit-demand>

Montreal investing \$1.7 billion to upgrade the métro system and make it more accessible

<https://montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/montreal-investing-1-7-billion-to-improve-metro-system>

New Caledonian Sleeper trains make their debut in the UK

<https://www.scotsman.com/news/transport/new-caledonian-sleeper-trains-to-make-passenger-debut-tonight-1-4916468>

Kitchener-Waterloo LRT services to launch June 21st

<https://www.therecord.com/news-story/9344572-here-s-all-you-need-to-know-as-the-much-anticipated-light-rail-launch-looms/>

We'd love to hear what you think! Enjoy reading through these news and updates, and reply back to this email with any thoughts you may have.

Bruce Budd

Bruce Budd, President
Transport Action Canada

P.S: Transport Action Canada is funded by grassroots members and donors like you.

Support our mission to ensure access to bus and rail services for to all Canadians by making a contribution.

Any amount-- \$25, \$50, \$100, \$200... Even \$10 will be deeply appreciated, and makes a real impact in our ability to continue our work.

Donate Now!

Can't spare a buck right now? You can help by recruiting a friend to join our fight for better public transportation across Canada...

Join Transport Action

If you prefer to send us a cheque, cheques may be mailed to:
Transport Action Canada, P.O. Box 858, Station B, Ottawa ON K1P 5P9

STAY CONNECTED:

