



TRANSPORT ACTION
CANADA

Dear ,

Our national AGM was held in Ottawa on Saturday, 25th May, and your new board has already been busy.

Ottawa Advocacy and AGM Report



David Jeanes, Ted Bartlett, Terry Johnson, and Peter Miasek met with Krista Leben and Janet Greene at the Railway Association of Canada on May 24th.

On May 24th, Transport Action board members met with the **Railway Association of Canada**, to discuss shared campaign priorities including infrastructure investment and grade crossing safety. They also met with **Anson Duran** , policy advisor to **Minister of Transport Marc Garneau** .

We highlighted the numerous pleas for federal government intervention to maintain reliable schedules contained in VIA Rail's latest annual report, asked whether Transport Canada is reviewing the changes to equipment standards adopted by the US FRA to allow European-style regional passenger trains to run in mixed traffic, and enquired as to why it has taken almost two years for the government of Canada to make a decision about High Frequency Rail.

We expect news about VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail proposal in the coming weeks. A decision on this will enable both Transport Canada and VIA Rail

management to turn their attention to other pressing issues across the country. The replacement of the Renaissance equipment on the Ocean, restoring and improving service frequencies both in the Maritimes and in Southwestern Ontario, and addressing the punctuality of the Canadian among others. In this federal election year, it will be particularly important for us to remind federal and provincial governments and elected representatives of the importance of setting aside partisanship and working together to deliver effective transportation networks for all regions of our country.

We also reiterated to Transport Canada the immediate challenge to public transportation across Canada from the closure of Greyhound West. This fallout is severe for those communities that have just lost every last shred of public transportation, yet it also reaches as far as the Maritimes where the viability of other regional bus services is jeopardized by lost revenues from packages and passengers that were carried onward to western Canada by interline connections. We have called upon the federal government to take charge of the situation, recognize this as a crisis, and exercise a strategic leadership role to ensure that replacement services from Canadian operators offer accessible service and interline ticketing. This will continue to be a campaign issue for Transport Action in the coming year.

Transport Action Canada Board Members 2019-2020

Your new board members, elected for 2019-2020 are:

Ted Bartlett - VP (Atlantic)
Matthew Buchanan (British Columbia)
Bruce Budd - Past President (Ontario)
Marcus Garnet - Secretary (Atlantic)
Davis Jeanes - Treasurer (Ontario)
Tim Hayman (Atlantic)
Terry Johnson - President (Ontario)
Steffen Knippel - VP (Prairie)
Peter Miasek - VP (Ontario)

In accordance with our constitution, the board may appoint up to three additional members during the year. Most meetings are held by video conference, and if you would like to find out more about volunteering on the national board, please reply to this email.

A Message From The New President

I grew up in the United Kingdom. We didn't own a car for many years, so holidays, trips to the countryside, visit to museums and football matches were by all by rail. Public transportation provided access to many opportunities, contributing to my eventually studying Politics and Economics at Oxford. Then I met my wife Chandra, and moved to Chatham, Ontario in 2003.



Terry Johnson and Bruce Budd at the AGM

I became heavily involved in Transport Action after the VIA Rail cuts of 2012 because the loss of the morning train from Windsor on weekends took away the option of family day trips to Toronto. By bringing together advocates and local advocacy groups across the region, Transport Action was able to make the case to get the Saturday morning train reinstated.

Running in the Ontario election in 2014, I heard the message on doorstep after doorstep that it was hard to keep a job, get to medical appointments, enjoy

sporting and cultural events, or access education and retraining. Inadequate transportation was really hurting people in small-town Canada. It still is.

I believe that the fight for adequate train and bus services is not a fight for mechanical contrivances, but for the people who use them, and who would like to be able to use them, to participate in our society. All Canadians should have access to public transportation, and it should be a dignified and safe way to get around.

I'm honoured to have been elected president of Transport Action, and I'm looking forward to working with you all to strengthen our advocacy for passenger rail, bus, and public transit services.



Terry Johnson, President
Transport Action Canada

Transport Action Updates

GO Expansion Bidders Shortlisted, Funding Announced

Transport Action Ontario has long supported the GO Expansion project (formerly Regional Express Rail) which will provide 15-minute all-day two-way service on core parts of the GO train network . In fact, our 2013 report "Regional Rapid Rail" was an important precursor to the provincial project announced in 2014.

The province has now taken a major step towards procurement of this massive project, shortlisting four pre-qualified consortia for the "On Corridor" work. The contract will be a 30-year Design-Build-Finance-Maintain Public Private Partnership. It uses outcome-based specifications where the winner is required to meet key performance metrics for train frequency, trip times, on-time performance, etc. It is up to the proponents to figure out how to achieve this most cost-effectively, whether to electrify, use hydrogen power, construct new track, or not.

The Canada Infrastructure Bank will finance up to \$2 billion of the contract, only its second transit deal. The release of this RFP and the financing for the "On-Corridor" works are good news, as they signify solid government commitment to this massive and vitally important project.

[See the Transport Action Ontario website for further details.](#)

Newfoundland Ferry Rate Issue Back in Court

The latest installment of the Newfoundland ferry rate issue was played out in a St. John's courtroom on May 28 and 29. Three justices of the Federal Court of Canada heard a petition by private marine freight carrier Oceanex for leave to appeal a ruling handed down last year by Judge Cecily Strickland. That judgement had rejected the controversial argument by Oceanex that the subsidized ferry rates were detrimental to its business, seeking to end the alleged unfair competition.

Most observers - including Transport Action Atlantic - maintain that the rates charged by Crown-owned Marine Atlantic are already too high, and inconsistent with the intent of the Terms of Union that brought Newfoundland into Confederation 70 years ago.

Although it's impossible to predict the eventual outcome, TAA's Tom Beckett - who sat through the two days of legal arguments - feels that the appellant's arguments were less than convincing. One federal government lawyer went so far as to suggest that Oceanex was only in the case for its own benefit, and not "kind to the greater public interest."

Meanwhile, TAA continues to focus on political action in its campaign for lower and more reasonable ferry rates - consistent with a modern interpretation of the Terms of Union.

Toronto Transit Summit 2019

TTCRiders (a member group of the *Move The GTHA* initiative alongside Transport Action Ontario) hosted a day long transit summit on May 26th, focusing on concerns about subway uploading and the Ontario government's legislation in "Getting Ontario Moving 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 loss of democratic accountability and local governance was a particular concern, because TTC consultations and feedback currently flow directly through local councillors, whereas Metrolinx can only be held accountable through the Ministry of Transportation, which means going through Queen's Park.

When Transport Action Ontario raised the question in a meeting with Minister Jeff Yurek's policy team in January, the rationale given was that Ontario is able to amortize expensive infrastructure projects like tunnelling over a longer period, 60 years versus 30. There are also concerns over the length of time it has taken to get any action at all on the replacement of the Scarborough RT or the Downtown Relief Line due to changes of plan at city hall.

As keynote speaker Jonathan English ([@EnglishRail](#) on Twitter) pointed out, once population density is taken into account, the TTC is the most successful transit network in North America by a wide margin. Any changes that reduce the synergy between Toronto's bus, streetcar, and subway networks are likely to be harmful, and therefore we believe the province should tread very carefully.

[See Transport Action Ontario's letter to Minister Jeff Yurek on the subject.](#)

NB rural transit pilot ends, promoters will keep trying

The rural transit pilot project in New Brunswick's Charlotte County, launched amid high hopes and considerable fanfare less than two years ago, has ground to a halt - at least for now. The daily bus to Saint John, branded as RuralLynx, made its final trip on May 31. Over 3300 passengers used the service over the 20 months it ran, but it did not attain the commercially viable ridership needed to operate without continued government funding - which wasn't forthcoming. The project identified many complex transportation needs, with the bus service addressing only part of the local requirements.

The Board of the Southwest NB Transit Authority isn't prepared to throw in the towel just yet. Believing there is a need for service between the rural communities and the major urban centre in the area, they are looking for alternatives. Proposals are being sought from local parties who might be interested in providing small on-demand, last mile service, but are concerned they might not be able to do it alone. The authority says it has developed a lot of expertise about the transportation needs of the area, and is prepared to share the lessons learned without obligation to any groups or individuals that might be interested in starting a replacement for the daily bus. Other sources of funding are also being sought.

Major Investment in Halifax Rail Infrastructure

Transport Minister Marc Garneau was front and centre in Halifax on June 2 for a major infrastructure announcement. The work will include reinstalling double track on about five miles of CN's Bedford Subdivision, connecting Halifax Ocean Terminals

(Halterm) and the VIA station with the port's other major container facility at Fairview Cove, and the mainline west to Moncton and Montreal. The federal government is contributing \$47.5 million, with a matching amount coming from the Halifax Regional Municipality, the provincial government, the Port of Halifax, and CN.

Full details of the project aren't yet available, and the work isn't expected to start until 2020, but the expected outcome is a dramatic reduction in truck traffic congestion in downtown Halifax, achieved by shuttling containers on rail between Halterm and Fairview. There will also be a major realignment of the Windsor Exchange, a highly-congested intersection through which highway transport accesses the port.

Transport Action Atlantic welcomes the announcement, and if done right the project could clearly have tremendous payback. Longtime TAA activist Clark Morris says by bringing back a second track (removed years ago by CN, with dubious foresight), converting all currently hand-thrown switches to remote powered turnouts, and installing an adequate signal system, an all-day every 15-minute commuter service could be run using appropriate equipment, while retaining the ability to accommodate three to four freight trains each hour.

Transportation Newsround

More details of the Halifax port investment announcement

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/halifax-port-federal-government-1.5159290>

<https://www.halifaxtoday.ca/local-news/port-of-halifax-infrastructure-project-will-improve-downtown-experience-two-experts-say-1486717>

Hashtag #stayontheground gaining traction

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2019/jun/04/stayontheground-swedes-turn-to-trains-amid-climate-flight-shame>

Greyhound - FirstGroup breaking up under pressure from activist investors

<https://www.bnnbloomberg.ca/greyhound-owner-firstgroup-gains-after-pursuing-breakup-plan-1.1266026>

UK Rail Franchising Lawsuits Snowballing

<http://railnews.mobi/news/2019/06/03-arriva-takes-franchise-leak-claim.html>

US Transit Agencies Form Automated Bus Consortium

<https://www.aecom.com/tr/press-releases/aecom-partners-with-transit-and-transportation-agencies-nationwide-to-form-the-automated-bus-consortium/>

World's largest fleet of hydrogen fuel cell trains ordered in Germany

<https://www.railwaygazette.com/news/traction-rolling-stock/single-view/view/worlds-largest-fleet-of-fuel-cell-trains-ordered.html>

Winnipeg's New Flyer acquires British bus company Alexander Dennis

<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/business/article-winnipegs-nfi-group-acquires-british-bus-company-alexander-dennis-for/>

Canadians are "World's Biggest Gas Guzzlers"

https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2019/05/13/canadian-auto-emissions-highest-world_a_23725546

The Cat That Saved a Japanese Rail Line

<http://www.bbc.com/travel/story/20190522-the-cat-who-saved-a-japanese-rail-line>

We'd love to hear what you think! We hope you enjoyed reading this newsletter. Reply to this email with any thoughts you may have, and your own local transport and advocacy updates.

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

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