

This newsletter is produced by Transport Action Canada for all members of the Transport Action family. If you are a member of Transport Action Atlantic, Ontario, Prairies or BC, you are automatically a member of Transport Action Canada. The regional organizations have chosen to issue a joint electronic newsletter covering all of Canada.



TRANSPORT ACTION  
CANADA

Dear ,

This month brings us exciting news from the west coast, where High Speed Rail could link Vancouver to the Pacific Northwest, but disappointing news from Ontario, where transportation investment is needed to protect jobs.

Follow our updates on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) as we respond to developments.

## Portland-Seattle-Vancouver High Speed Rail "Makes Economic Sense"



Bombardier Zefiro 380 - Photo by Björn König

On July 15, 2019 the Washington State Department of Transportation released its ***Ultra-High-Speed Ground Transportation*** study and business case,

forecasting \$355 billion in economic growth, up to 200,000 jobs created, and 3 million passengers annually.

**Transport Action BC** agrees that high speed rail (HSR) linking Vancouver, Seattle and Portland is a great idea, but there are a lot of questions and complexities surrounding this proposal yet to be answered.

First, the line must serve the city centres of Vancouver, Seattle and Portland. BC Premier John Horgan's suggestion that Surrey be the end-of-the-line would add an extra forty-five minutes to the travel time to downtown Vancouver, and more than an hour to the airport. That would be a serious mistake. Instead, consideration should be given to building a four-track joint high speed and regional rail corridor from downtown towards Surrey that would better serve regional trips toward Abbotsford, relieve the Expo Line, and increase connectivity to the HSR.

Read the full story on our BC website:

<http://bc.transportaction.ca/issues/rail/high-speed-rail/portland-seattle-vancouver-high-speed-rail-makes-economic-sense/>

## Following up on the SW Ontario Transportation Plan

With the appointment of a new Ontario Minister of Transportation, the Hon. Caroline Mulroney, **Transport Action Ontario** took the opportunity to follow up on contacts with her predecessor and to reiterate recommendations for the regional transportation plan than is expected this fall. The letter to the Minister summarized the need for a robust public transportation option, the available technical reports on High Performance Rail (HPR), the need to include VIA Rail Canada and the Federal Government in the plan, and key next steps including an apples-to-apples evaluation of the benefits of the expected HPR plan compared to the earlier HSR study.

The full letter to Minister Mulroney can be viewed here:

<http://ontario.transportaction.ca/letter-to-minister-mulroney/>

## Bombardier announces layoffs in Thunder Bay, finger-pointing won't save jobs.

Bombardier announced 550 layoffs in Thunder Bay on July 10th. The Thunder Bay plant, one of the city's largest employers, manufactures bi-level commuter rail cars, TTC subway cars, and LRVs. The layoffs coincide with the winding down of the long-delayed TTC streetcar order.

This announcement was swiftly followed by federal and provincial political moves to apportion blame, building upon federal-provincial disputes over who it is that is holding up the flow of capital investment for transit projects. Such finger pointing gives no comfort to the workers affected, and both governments should instead sit down to resolve their differences and keep Ontario's transit projects moving forward.

While some politicians have once again raised the issue of the VIA Rail corridor fleet order from Siemens in California, this criticism is misguided. Canada's free trade agreements with the European Union and the United States *do not allow* Via Rail to favour Bombardier in the awarding of contracts. VIA Rail simply doesn't have time before the remaining LRC passenger cars wear out and have to be withdrawn to get itself embroiled in an international trade dispute.

Playing the "Buy Canada" card is possible for commuter rail equipment, but should be done with care, because US commuter agency orders for bi-levels are also vital to retaining jobs in Thunder Bay. **Transport Action Ontario** is therefore following the Metrolinx procurement process for GO Regional Express Rail closely.

We continue to advocate steady investment in passenger rail, rather than feast-famine cycles of government largess and austerity, and for a coherent industrial policy

around railway equipment in Canada.

## Ontario Resumes Work on GTA-West 413 Expressway

The new Ontario Progressive Conservative government has resurrected the Environmental Assessment for a proposed new six-lane 400-series expressway running from Vaughan to Milton. They will be holding Public Information Centres in the fall to present the technically preferred route.

Ontario first started work on this project in 2007, so the original \$4 billion price tag will now have grown significantly, making it a high price to pay for worsening traffic congestion. In early 2018, the Ontario Liberal government announced that the expressway project would not move forward. Its Expert Panel had found a large number of concerns with the EA study, and concluded that the EA did not demonstrate that a new expressway was the only reasonable alternative.

**Transport Action Ontario** has been participating in the public discourse since the beginning, emphasizing that existing highways, transit, and rail must be fully expanded first. TAO intends to oppose the project once again. The 2018 Expert Panel report provides an excellent array of thoughtful arguments that can be used to oppose the expressway.

For further details, consult our Ontario website under "[Highways and Bridges](#)".

## RFQ issued for new Newfoundland Ferry

Marine Atlantic is moving forward with an open competitive process for the procurement of a new vessel for its Newfoundland ferry fleet, according to an announcement from the Crown corporation on July 17.

The first stage of this process is the release of a Request for Qualifications (RFQ), intended to identify and shortlist applicants who will be eligible to participate in the second phase, a Request for Proposals (RFP) process. The competition will be open to both domestic and international bidders, with a closing date by the end of 2019. Provision for the acquisition was made in the 2019 federal budget.

Marine Atlantic says the new vessel will be a ro-pax design with the ability to carry commercial freight and offer passenger amenities. It's understood that it will replace the aging MV Leif Ericson, currently the oldest ship by far in the organization's four-vessel fleet. The Norwegian-built Ericson operates primarily as a commercial vehicle carrier, and will be 34 years old by 2024, when her replacement is expected to be ready for service.

What isn't clear at this point is the plan for eventual replacement of MV Atlantic Vision, the only chartered vessel in the fleet. The Vision, which boasts a high level of cruise-style amenities, runs on the seasonal North Sydney to Argentia service, while providing the necessary backup for the constitutionally-mandated year-round North Sydney-Port aux Basques run. On lease since 2008, the charter agreement has been renewed several times, and is now set to expire in late 2020, but there is a provision for further extension.

<http://www.marineatlantic.ca/en/media/News-Releases/Marine-Atlantic-issues-Request-for-Qualifications-for-delivery-of-new-vessel/>

## TransLink and SFU exploring Mobility as a Service

Vancouver's TransLink and Simon Fraser University held a seminar on July 24th to discuss Mobility as a Service (MaaS) whereby a single smartphone application is used to access and control all of one's transportation services, whatever the mode. Leveraging existing technology and shared transportation services, MaaS is seen as a response to disruptions in traditional transportation services, and an opportunity to provide an alternative to privately owned automobiles. The concept of MaaS originated in Finland, where it now plays a key role in national transportation policy.

# Transportation Newsround

Deal reached to fix wharf so that vehicles can board ferries between Fortune and St-Pierre-Miquelon by the beginning of 2020.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/st-pierre-miquelon-fortune-ferry-deal-1.5212394>

All A'bored: Riding the Sweet, But So Slow, Skeena Train

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2019/07/17/Slow-Skeena-Train/>

A year after Greyhound... no safe transportation for many westerners.

<https://edmontonjournal.com/opinion/columnists/opinion-one-year-after-greyhound-no-one-has-filled-the-gap>

Advocates Want to Bring Passenger Rail Back to the Fraser Valley

<https://thetyee.ca/News/2019/07/05/Advocates-Passenger-Rail-Fraser-Valley>

International press coverage for Innisfil, Ontario's subsidized Uber experiment

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2019/jul/16/the-innisfil-experiment-the-town-that-replaced-public-transit-with-uber>

Policy whitepaper provides an insightful and constructive critique of Amtrak's accounting methods and anti-long-distance bias:

<https://www.railwayage.com/passenger/intercity/white-paper-how-amtrak-can-best-serve-the-nations-mobility-needs/>

Cuba has taken delivery of the first of 240 new passenger cars for China; High Speed Rail project a possibility.

<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cuba-trains/cuba-takes-first-step-in-railways-upgrade-with-chinese-russian-help-idUSKCN1U900D>

France: SNCF tests its first autonomous train

<https://www.railtech.com/digitalisation/2019/07/12/sncf-tests-its-first-autonomous-train/>

United Kingdom: High Speed 2 costs could rise by another \$30 billion

<https://www.bbc.com/news/business-49048823>

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.

Thanks for reading!



Terry Johnson  
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.

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