

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 ,

January 15th marked 30 years since many towns and cities saw their last train, falling victim to the 1990 cuts. Thanks to **Transport Action** members like you, many MPs also received phone calls or emails that day, reminding them that the need for those services to be restored is stronger than ever.

Read our full article using the link below, and you can use the button on our site to phone your MP as well.

### 30 Years of Isolation

In 1990, Canada bet against inter-city trains and passengers. In the same year France was betting on the future of rail, opening TGV Atlantique. It's now safe to say Canada lost that bet, and over the last 30 years more and more countries across Europe, Asia, and in Africa have invested in the passenger rail infrastructure and services needed to support sustainable economic growth, joining the winning side. It's time Canada did too.



[Read more](#)

### Upcoming Meetings

It's that time of year again when we start planning for our Annual General Meetings. Save these dates:

Transport Action Ontario AGM - on April 25, in Toronto.

Transport Action Canada AGM - on May 23, also in Toronto.

Details of venues and guest speakers will be posted on the TAO and TAC websites as they become available. If you are interested in standing for election

to a position on the board, or submitting a resolution for discussion at either AGM, please contact Peter Miasek or Terry Johnson.

## Transport Action Atlantic meets with MPs



Ted Bartlett and Tim Hayman meet with Andy Fillmore MP

Ted Bartlett and Tim Hayman of **Transport Action Atlantic** had two face-to-face meetings with MPs during the final week of the Christmas-New Year parliamentary break to advance our public transportation agenda, meeting with Janica Atwin, the newly-elected Green Party MP for Fredericton on January 20th, and with Halifax MP Andy Fillmore, recently appointed as parliamentary secretary to Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, on the 21st.

The meeting with New Brunswick's Jenica Atwin went extremely well. Ms. Atwin is a strong supporter of climate-friendly transportation, and chose to demonstrate this by travelling to Ottawa by train with her family for her swearing-in ceremony - even though it meant a 170-km drive from her home in Fredericton to the nearest VIA Rail station. She has assured us that she is firmly onside with Transport Action's key agenda items, including our advocacy for restoration of freight service on the dormant CN line in Cape Breton. She will seek to build alliances with members of other parties on these issues.

TAA has established a good relationship with Mr. Fillmore, who also follows us on social media, and frequently likes tweets about passenger rail. A request for a meeting with Minister McKenna was sent in writing before Christmas, and two other meetings with local MPs in the Maritimes are being worked on.

## SW Ontario Transportation Plan Unveiled



Ontario Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney, accompanied by London Mayor Ed Holder; Environment Minister Jeff Yurek, MPP for Elgin-Middlesex-London; Agriculture Minister Ernie Hardeman, MPP for Oxford; and Consumer Affairs Minister Lisa Thompson, MPP for Huron-Bruce; and Bob Bailey, MPP for Sarnia-Lambton unveiled the regional transportation plan for Southwestern Ontario on January 17th

Ontario Minister of Transportation Caroline Mulroney unveiled a new draft regional transportation plan for Southwestern Ontario in London on January 17th. Paul Stevens from the local advocacy group *Inter-City Rail and Transport Action* President Terry Johnson were in attendance.

This announcement was originally expected in the fall, and we were told that the Northern Ontario plan, also expected in the fall, would follow, along with a new plan for Eastern Ontario.

The five goals and 43 points in the [Connecting the Southwest](#) document provide a broad outline of the province's objectives, a synthesis of previous funding announcements, and future directions that the province has asked for public feedback on. An online survey is available until March, so [use it to speak up for more frequent train services](#).

While several of the points in the plan relate to highway safety and bottlenecks, enhanced rail and bus services appear to be a substantial portion of the plan. We look forward to seeing them turn into actions to reverse the decline of regional and rural mobility in Southwestern Ontario.

We are encouraged to see public transportation concerns and ideas from communities large and small across the region being taken seriously by the province, including engaging with mayors to build upon the bus services created by the Community Transportation Grants, and focusing on a regional bus network with a high performance rail spine, as recommended in our policy research and [reports](#).

The province says it is working to identify opportunities for incremental improvements to deliver more frequent and reliable passenger services using the existing rail corridors, as an alternative to building the new high speed rail

alignment first proposed by the previous government in 2014.

While the Minister stated that constructive discussions with VIA Rail were underway, the idea of extending GO commuter trains over longer distances was also mentioned, and this should be regarded with caution. It is imperative that the passenger rail improvements between London and Toronto are part of a strategy that benefits the whole region, including additional services to Sarnia, Stratford, and Windsor.

<http://ontario.transportaction.ca/mto-transportation-plan-southwestern-ontario/>

**Transport Action Ontario** has also made a submission to the Ontario government, providing input to the upcoming 2020 provincial budget, due in April/May. Our input can viewed [here](#).

## VIA Corporate Plan warning for the *Ocean*

VIA Rail has a major looming problem on its hands in Halifax. Effective November 1, 2020, access to the "balloon track" at the Halterm container terminal adjacent to Halifax station will be cut off, leaving VIA with no place to turn the *Ocean*. The nearest wye is at Truro, some 60 miles away. The issue was confirmed in the latest issue of the Crown corporation's 5-year Corporate Plan, recently posted on its website, noting that it's "illustrative of the inherent shortcomings of the TSA (train service agreement) and the relationships with infrastructure providers."

The waterfront property is a federal government asset, owned - like VIA - by the people of Canada, but leased to Singapore-based PSA International. That operator has apparently decided that the real estate is too valuable to keep the loop track in place, so VIA has to go.

Obviously, there's something wrong with this picture! A corporation with a lease on public property, and apparently aided and abetted by the Port of Halifax and CN, is bullying a federal Crown corporation into submission, and threatening the very existence of what little passenger rail service Atlantic Canada has left. According to the Corporate Plan, Transport Canada got involved, but that only postponed the inevitable. VIA is still searching for solutions as the deadline nears, but none of the alternatives are looking particularly positive. Clearly the Government of Canada needs to turn up the heat on this issue, and ensure that corporate greed doesn't override public interest on a piece of land owned by the taxpayers.

[https://www.viarail.ca/sites/all/files/media/pdfs/About\\_VIA/our-company/corporate-plan/Corporate\\_Plan2019.pdf](https://www.viarail.ca/sites/all/files/media/pdfs/About_VIA/our-company/corporate-plan/Corporate_Plan2019.pdf)

## Ottawa LRT - Light at the end of the tunnel?

Since Ottawa's new Confederation Line LRT began service on 14 September 2019 it has been plagued with a myriad of problems, straining the patience of Ottawa commuters to breaking point, and casting a shadow over future public-private partnership transit projects.



James Boyle, a rail expert from England, has now been brought in to try to guide the analysis and resolution of all the LRT's problems.

[Read our fully story here.](#)

## Transportation Newsround

Owen Sound to Guelph bus service started by Kasper

<https://www.wellingtonadvertiser.com/new-bus-service/>

STO going ahead with Gatineau LRT

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/sto-tramway-lrt-gatineau-ottawa-1.5446921>

Northumberland County suggesting GO expansion

<https://www.quintenews.com/2020/01/13/go-transit-into-northumberland-county/>

Bus service to Gabriola Island BC celebrates 100,000th passenger

<https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/gabriola-bus-service-celebrates-100000th-passenger>

GO-TTC transfers to become more expensive

<https://www.narcity.com/news/ca/on/toronto/go-transit-ttc-discount-will-be-cut-starting-this-spring>

Metrolinx holding public meetings on Ontario Line

<https://toronto.citynews.ca/2020/01/23/metrolinx-public-meetings-ontario-line/>

Amtrak backs down on \$25,000 charge for group of disabled passengers

<https://www.npr.org/2020/01/22/798694336/amtrak-reverses-course-on-25-000-bill>

UK's Northern Rail becomes latest privatization failure

<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2020/jan/29/northern-rail-franchise-to-be-renationalised>

AECOM and Arup to work on VIA Rail HFR project

<https://www.newswire.ca/news-releases/high-frequency-rail-aecom-and-arup-consortium-selected-as-owner-s-engineers-858078227.html>

Testing starting in Edmonton for Valley Line Southeast

<https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/first-train-rolls-out-on-valley-line-lrt-southeast-1.4765195>

Realignment, bridge over the Bow River for planned Green Line LRT in Calgary.

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/council-reveals-green-lines-new-potential-downtown-path>

SkyTrain adding new trains to increase Canada Line frequencies

[https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger\\_rail/news/TransLink-increases-capacity-on-Canada-Line-rail-service--59548](https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger_rail/news/TransLink-increases-capacity-on-Canada-Line-rail-service--59548)

First Nations, UBC, Vancouver launch joint pitch to fund Broadway subway completion to UBC

<https://globalnews.ca/news/6478551/ubc-subway-announcement/>

Abbotsford mayor advocates borrowing \$8 billion for Fraser Valley commuter rail

<https://www.surreynowleader.com/news/borrow-8-billion-for-fraser-valley-rail-link-abbotsford-mayor-urges-province/>

Bombardier in talks to merge rail business with Alstom

<https://www.railtech.com/policy/2020/01/23/bombardier-in-merger-talks-with-alstom/>

We 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.

**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!**

Our membership is our strength. 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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