



TRANSPORT ACTION
CANADA

Transport Action News - May 2021



Hello ,

As spring arrives and the last of the snow clears, it's almost time for our Annual General Meeting, and for the second year we'll be holding our meeting entirely online, using Zoom. Details are below and members will receive a registration link by email shortly.

Mike Cassidy, CEO of Maritime Bus, will be joining us to share his vision for the restoration of motorcoach services across Canada and discuss the proposal for a *Coast-to-Coast Bus Coalition*. We'll also be electing board members to lead Transport Action's education and advocacy work for the coming year. If you are interested in volunteering to serve on our national board or getting more involved in transport advocacy in your region, please reach out by [replying](#) to this newsletter.

VIA Rail received a welcome "shot in the arm" in the federal budget on April 19th with the announcement of **\$491.2 million** for infrastructure investments in the Quebec-Windsor corridor "that would support the overall success of the HFR project." However, this falls far short of approval for a full program to provide frequent and reliable train services in the corridor, let alone elsewhere in Canada, and we await details of projects this funding will cover. The federal government has also yet to respond to our request for new accessible coaches and sleepers to start the renewal of the long-distance fleet. Without such investment, Canada's long-distance and remote train services will remain at risk. However, the delivery of the first of the new Siemens trains to replace the corridor fleet is fast approaching, see the story below...

Over the past year, some of us have temporarily had limited opportunities to travel due to pandemic. That's a situation that's all too familiar and long-lasting for communities and Canadians across the Prairies. Between successive cuts to VIA Rail, the abrupt termination of STC bus services, and the abandonment of Greyhound's routes in western Canada, there's a lot of damage to be undone to build a sustainable and inclusive transportation future for the region.

We're now working on a completely new **Prairie Region** website with a view to stepping up campaigning for the restoration of adequate rail and bus services throughout the region. Can you help? We need volunteers to write articles and draft online campaign materials. Reply to this newsletter or [email me](#) if you'd like to be involved.



Terry Johnson, President
Transport Action Canada

2021 Annual General Meeting

Guest Speaker: Mike Cassidy

CEO, Maritime Bus / Coach Atlantic

"Rebuilding a coast to coast bus network"

When: Saturday May 29th, 2021

1 pm (Eastern) / 10 am (Pacific)

Where: Zoom Online Video and Telephone Conference

To ensure you get your invitation and registration link for our Annual General Meeting, please make sure your membership is up to date:

Join or Renew
Now

Becoming a member, for just \$30 per year, or by making a regular monthly donation supports our public transport research and advocacy across Canada.

New VIA Rail corridor fleet taking shape



Siemens is close to delivering the first of the new VIA Rail corridor trains, ordered in December 2018, for testing, starting in late summer.

VIA Rail released a short “teaser” video of the new Siemens trains on social media on March 31st. While many design details and technical differences between the VIA Rail order and previous Charger and Venture orders remain under wraps pending the official unveiling of the first train later this summer, the published details and presentations given to the Next Generation Equipment Committee suggest that there have been several refinements to the design and paint scheme since the original announcement.

[Find out what we know so far...](#)

Kamloops-Edmonton bus service starts May 20th

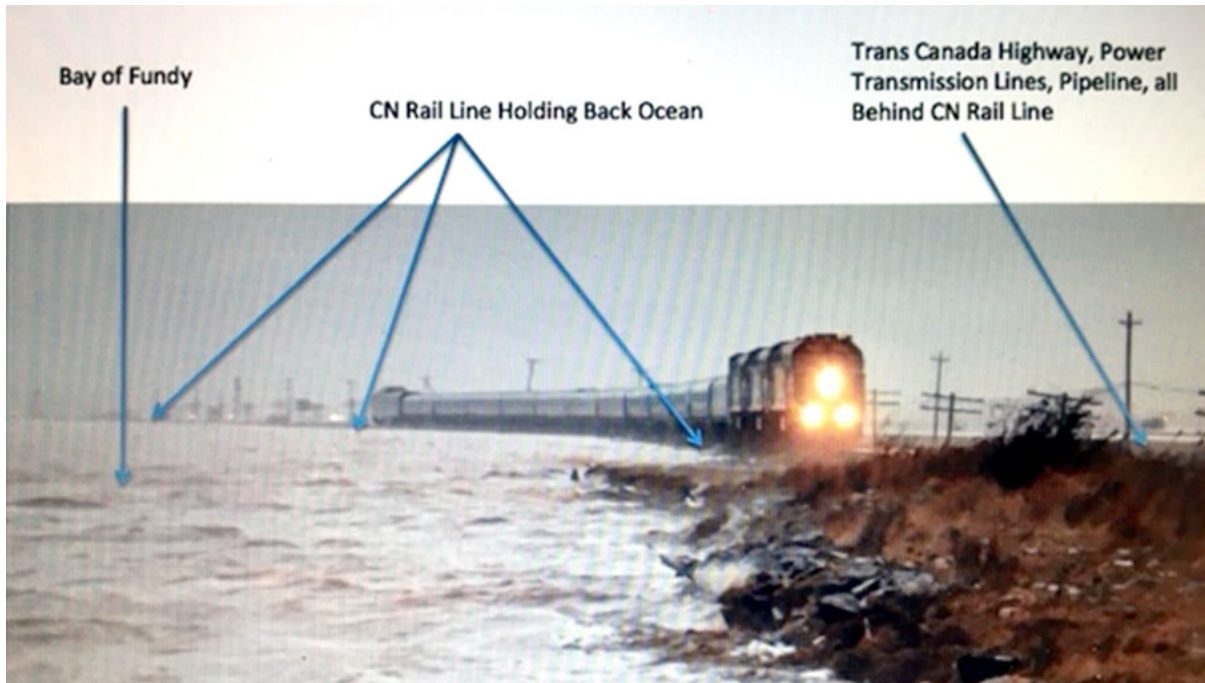
Kamloops-based motorcoach operator Thompson Valley Charters will launch a scheduled service between Kamloops and Edmonton on May 20, 2021. The service will be operated in coordination with Pacific Western's eBus services between Kamloops and Vancouver, offering connecting fares and coordinated schedules.



Initially, this new bus service will run eastbound on Mondays and Thursdays, and westbound on Tuesdays and Fridays, re-establishing service over one of the many routes in western Canada abandoned by Greyhound in 2018. Once the pandemic is brought under control, it is likely that the service frequency will be increased to meet demand.

[Read more on our website...](#)

Chignecto Isthmus report expected this month



Transport Action Atlantic is looking forward to reviewing the long-awaited report on the vulnerability of the Chignecto Isthmus – the narrow low-lying land between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick – which is now expected to be revealed by the end of May. The vital transportation corridor which carries both the CN Halifax-Moncton mainline and the Trans-Canada Highway is under threat from rising sea levels.

During extreme high tides, the rail bed actually serves as a dyke that prevents the highway from being overwhelmed. The highway and rail line between them carry an estimated \$20 billion worth of commerce each year, so it is a matter of considerable concern for the entire region. The report, commissioned early in 2020, is expected to propose several possible remedial alternatives, but the larger question will likely be how to fund the necessary work.

[More news on Transport Action Atlantic's website](#)

Controversial Business Case for Yonge North Subway Extension Released

Residents in the Thornhill neighbourhood in York Region were blindsided in mid March when Metrolinx released its long-awaited Initial Business Case for the Yonge North Subway Extension (YNSE). The alignment approved by the Metrolinx board in 2020 proceeds north from Finch Station about 5 km, and then turns sharply east and tunnels under 60 homes, one school and a creek to reach the GO Richmond Hill corridor.

Transport Action Ontario (TAO) supports construction of this subway, but we also support getting the best value for our capital dollars. Therefore, it is concerning that, despite its width, the portion under Yonge Street is slated for deep tunneling rather than the cheaper cut and cover. Metrolinx has not provided solid answers about why the eastward piece cannot be constructed using cut & cover under some currently undeveloped lands nearby. TAO has

submitted a proposal to Metrolinx showing that such a route appears technically feasible, and Metrolinx has agreed to study it.

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

Quebec City Tramway wins provincial backing

After years of disagreement between the city and the province, Quebec Premier François Legault and Quebec City Mayor Régis Labeaume have reached a compromise, with both levels of government now able to agree on the route the proposed Quebec City tramway will take, as well as how the new transit network, with both trams and dedicated bus lanes, can better serve citizens in the northern suburbs.



[Read more...](#)

Save the Alexandra Bridge



Transport Action Canada is part of the newly-formed Alexandra Bridge Coalition in Ottawa, which is urging the federal government to take a second look at its plan to demolish and replace the historic Alexandra cantilever bridge. The coalition has sent letters to the Prime Minister and the minister responsible for Public Services and Procurement Canada, calling on them to

explore whether the 120-year old bridge can have an extended life as a green transportation link for pedestrians, cycling, and possibly a light rail line as part of a proposed Confederation Boulevard streetcar loop.

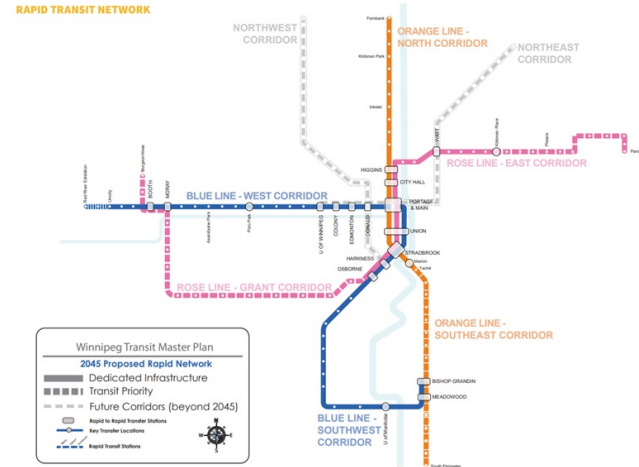
More information about the bridge can be found at <http://heritageottawa.org/alexandra-bridge>, including a [brief history by David Jeanes](#), who also represents Transport Action on the Coalition.

Winnipeg Transit Master Plan approved

On April 29, 2021 the Winnipeg city council approved the new Winnipeg Transit Master Plan (WTMP), providing a blueprint for significant transit changes in the city over the next 25 years.

This \$1 billion plan overhauls the entire transit system in Winnipeg, extending the existing bus-rapid-transit (BRT) line and adding two more, while adding a new terminal integrated with the downtown train station and a new bus depot.

The plan also envisions replacing the existing diesel powered buses with zero-emission buses.



[Full story... and a preview of the new Transport Action Prairie Region site](#)

Improving and expanding Kitchener GO service

One of the prime transportation objectives of the Ontario government is to establish two-way all-day GO train service along the “Innovation Corridor” between Toronto and Kitchener, and funding for this project was confirmed in the 2021 Ontario provincial budget.

The current operation provides limited service to Kitchener. Metrolinx has now released the Preliminary Design Business Case (PDBC) defining the infrastructure requirements, costs and benefits of reaching the provincial objective. The PDBC also mentions other potential future enhancements, such as a direct connection to Pearson Airport, electrification beyond Bramalea and service extension to Southwestern Ontario. Transport Action will continue to monitor this strategic project closely. [Read more...](#)

Transportation Newsround

Federal Budget earmarks money for next steps in high-frequency rail project

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7773308/federal-budget-money-next-steps-high-frequency-rail-project-peterborough/>

Amtrak ramps up pursuit of Detroit to Toronto rail passenger service

<https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/amtrak-continues-to-pursue-detroit-to-toronto-rail-passenger-service>

Provincial budget spells out two-way all-day Kitchener GO train service

<https://www.theifp.ca/news-story/10364890--very-pleased-provincial-budget-spells-out-two-way-all-day-service-for-georgetown-go-train-service/>

Cobourg launching “Cobourg Rides” on-demand transit

<https://www.gonorthumberland.ca/2021/04/05/town-of-cobourg-launching-cobourg-rides-april-19th/>

Montreal and Quebec chambers of commerce call upon the government to advance the High Frequency Rail project, including the Quebec City portion

<https://www.lesoleil.com/opinions/point-de-vue/le-tgf-quebec-windsor-un-grand-projet-pour-la-relevance-23338146568b4783bcb5a22ce5622422>

BC makes transit free for kids

<https://www.vicnews.com/news/public-transit-to-be-free-for-kids-12-and-older-a-bold-b-c-budget-line-advocates-applaud/>

Quebec and Ottawa reach deal for REM station at Montreal airport
<https://globalnews.ca/news/7760539/montreal-dorval-airport-rem-funding-deal/>

NCC to study Ottawa-Gatineau tram
<https://www.iheartradio.ca/580-cfra/news/budget-2021-ncc-to-study-ottawa-gatineau-tram-possibilities-1.15028813>

Province negotiating to purchase Quebec bridge from CN.
<https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/1786558/pont-quebec-yvon-charest-negociation-canadien-national-labeaume>

Muskoka advocates confident in passenger rail's return
<https://www.muskokaregion.com/news-story/10372574--it-just-makes-so-much-sense-muskoka-advocates-confident-in-passenger-rail-s-return/>

Ontario criticized for lack of transparency over Northlander plans
<https://wawa-news.com/index.php/2021/04/26/what-is-the-government-hiding-in-its-passenger-rail-plan-for-the-north/>

Opinion: Reinstated Northlander would be a hit, "The Cobalt" name suggested
<https://www.nugget.ca/opinion/passenger-rail-service-would-be-a-hit>

Edmonton launches redesigned bus network and on-demand transit
<https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/edmonton-transit-service-launches-on-demand-service-and-redesigned-bus-routes-1.5401624>

Roam Transit in Banff to use reservations for tourist routes this summer
<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/reservation-pilot-launch-johnston-canyon-201639913.html>

Enforcement cameras coming to TTC streetcars
<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/04/29/cameras-to-capture-drivers-who-blow-past-open-streetcar-doors-coming-to-the-ttc.html>

Flair Airlines to start services from Waterloo to Halifax and western Canada
<https://kitchener.ctvnews.ca/flair-airlines-to-start-service-in-waterloo-region-this-weekend-1.5409472>

UK: ScotRail train to be converted to hydrogen
<https://www.railtech.com/innovation/2021/01/01/retired-scotrail-train-will-be-transformed-to-run-on-hydrogen/>

France: Domestic flights banned where trains can complete the trip in under 2.5 hours.
<https://www.theguardian.com/business/2021/apr/12/france-ban-some-domestic-flights-train-available-macron-climate-convention-mps>

Australia: Australasian Railway Association CEO Caroline Wilkie calls for investment in high performance rail followed by high speed.
<https://www.globalrailwayreview.com/article/120818/potential-australian-high-speed-rail/>

Transport Action Canada is funded by grassroots members and donors like you. Your support enables us to continue our mission to ensure access to bus and rail services for to all Canadians.

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

Join or Renew
Now

If you would prefer to join or make a donation by mail, please [download our printable membership form](#) and post it to us at the address below with a cheque.

Thank you again for your continued support!

Transport Action Canada | Charity Number: 11926 8571 RR0001 | www.transportaction.ca

