



TRANSPORT ACTION  
CANADA

## Transport Action News January 2022



*Confederation Line train leaving Tremblay*

### Keeping Canada moving beyond Omicron

Hello ,

After a strong recovery in passenger travel in the fall, an abrupt turn in the pandemic situation shortly before Christmas has put a lot of plans on hold, and many transit agencies have now had to reduce services due to staff illness time off to care for family members. Those measures are necessary and understandable.

Unfortunately, some agencies and VIA Rail have cut service frequencies far more sharply in response to this new short-term drop in travel demand. We strongly suspect there's significant pressure coming down from Ottawa to save money, but this approach ends up costing us all more in the long run because ridership takes longer to return. Recovery requires frequencies for passengers to return to.

Amtrak's annual report shows the return of 75% of pre-pandemic ridership in the year ending September 30 2021, whereas VIA's reported ridership for the same four quarters had only recovered to just 21% of 2019's record of 5 million passengers. While this is partly attributable to a robust approach to public health measures north of the border, it also reflects the impact of deeper and longer lasting cuts to service frequencies. Cutting frequencies doesn't really save much money because many costs are fixed, and VIA is aware that even the frequencies it was able to run in 2019, constrained by its existing fleet and available train paths, didn't come close

to fulfilling the demand for frequent and reliable passenger rail in Canada. We would argue that the less than daily long-distance service, and the handful of trains per day on intercity routes (which could support hourly service given a chance under normal circumstances) was *already* a reduced service.

You can help stop unnecessary and counterproductive cuts: Please call or write to your Member of Parliament requesting operating funding in budget 2022 to see VIA Rail and public transit systems across the country through what will, hopefully, be the last round of pandemic restrictions, and then to expand the availability of public transportation as one of the best ways to meet Canada's climate goals.

Phone Your MP

Email Your MP

However, we are pleased that VIA Rail has so far maintained the second *Ocean* round trip, reinstated before Christmas, and appears to be hiring crew for the planned return to pre-pandemic frequencies on the *Canadian* later this year.

There was also a present from VIA Rail on Christmas Eve – in the form of an [invitation](#) to railway equipment suppliers to an information day this spring regarding long distance fleet renewal. This tentative but encouraging first step in the process is similar to the first public step that was taken toward the renewal of the corridor fleet.



Terry Johnson, President  
Transport Action Canada



## GO Rail Expansion in the GTHA - the Path Forward

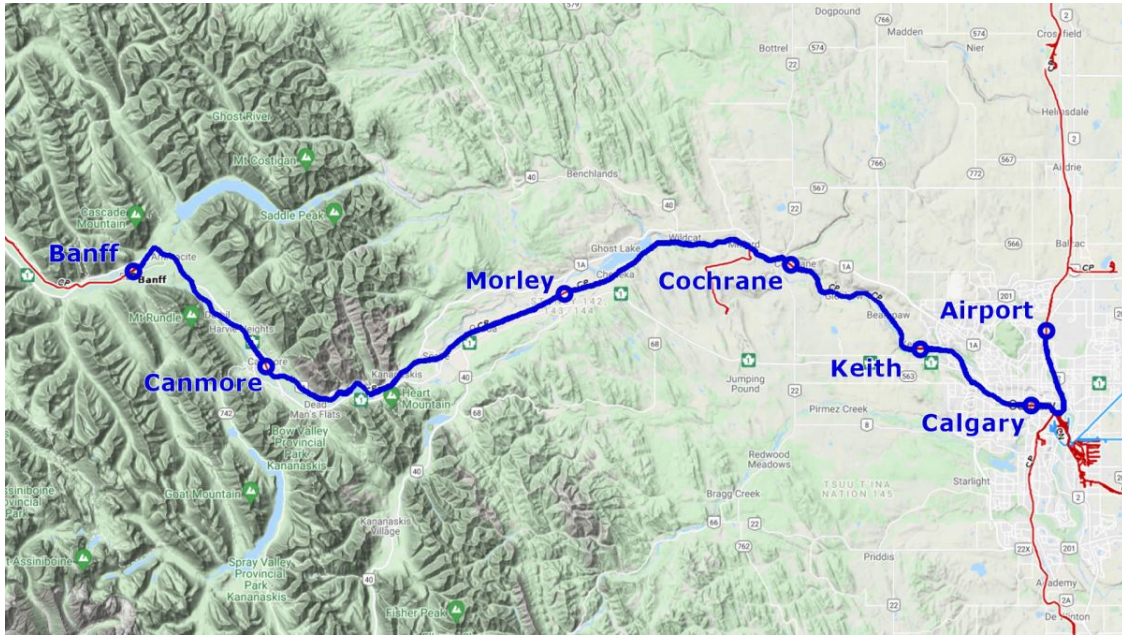
In November, 2021, Metrolinx released an important update on their \$27B + GO

Expansion Program for announcing the successful proponent is to be announced in 2022.

[Read more](#)

[ontario.transportation.ca](https://ontario.transportation.ca)

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## Calgary-Banff project secures capital partnership

On December 8, 2021, Liricon Capital, the proponents of the Calgary Airport to Banff Rail (CABR) project announced a partnership with Plenary Americas.

[Read more](#)

[prairie.transportation.ca](https://prairie.transportation.ca)

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## Ontario Pre-2022 Election Briefing Note - Short Line Rail

In anticipation of the upcoming Ontario provincial election in June, 2022, Transport Action Ontario has issued a briefing note on an important transportation-related issue that has not currently received the visibility it warrants. This issue in...

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## Atlantic Transport News - January 2022

Welcome to the first 2022 installment of Atlantic Transport News! Here's a look at what you'll find in this edition: HOLIDAY TRAVELLERS FACE COVID CHALLENGES While many Atlantic Canadians chose the cautious route over the Christmas-New Year...

[Read more](#)

[transportactionatlantic.ca](http://transportactionatlantic.ca)



### Response to Mandate Letter to Minister Alghabra

Prime Minister Trudeau released his mandate letters to all cabinet ministers in mid December. Transport Action Ontario has written to Minister of Transport Alghabra providing several critical perspectives on the letter he received. They are -Full ...

[Read more](#)

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## Transportation Newsround

Mississauga's MiWay launches customer charter

<https://www.mississauga.ca/city-of-mississauga-news/news/better-transit-for-everyone-miway-launches-customer-charter/>

Surviving the Scarborough Rapid Transit shutdown: riders call on city and province to act before 2023

<https://www.thestar.com/local-toronto-scarborough/news/2021/12/08/surviving-the-scarborough-rapid-transit-shutdown-riders-call-on-city-and-province-to-act-before-2023.html>

Company behind proposed Calgary-Banff rail link asks province to kick in

<https://www.moosejawtoday.com/national-business/company-behind-proposed-calgary-banff-rail-link-asks-province-to-kick-in-4843380>

Alberta government closely monitoring Calgary-to-Banff rail proposal

<https://globalnews.ca/video/8434991/alberta-government-closely-monitoring-calgary-to-banff-rail-proposal-but-not-ready-to-finance-yet-kenney>

Perth County council voices its disappointment with Via Rail scheduling changes

<https://www.wellandtribune.ca/ts/news/canada/2021/12/10/perth-county-council-voices-its-disappointment-with-via-rail-scheduling-changes.html>

Opinion: No timetable for purchasing passenger coaches, no serious plan to restore the Northlander

<https://www.thesudburystar.com/opinion/columnists/column-smoke-and-mirrors-checking-the-choo-choo-tracks>

Events in Manitoba, Alberta mark 125th anniversary of Canadian Northern predecessor

<https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/events-in-manitoba-alberta-to-mark-125th-anniversary-of-canadian-northern-predecessor/>

Trip Report: Ocean observations and videos

<http://timstraintravels.blogspot.com/2021/12/ocean-observations-and-videos.html>

Cobourg commuters demand Via Rail reinstate 'essential' train service

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/toronto/cobourg-via-rail-train-service-1.6285173>

Winnipeg approves \$70m for transit project

<https://o.canada.com/news/news-news/city-passes-budget-including-70m-loan-for-transit-project>

Transit service expanding in Kamloops

<https://cfjctoday.com/2021/12/20/transit-service-expanding-in-kamloops-in-2022/>

Metrolinx, Crosslinx discuss measures to get on board with inclusivity, diversity

<https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/labour/2021/12/transit-builders-discuss-measures-to-get-on-board-with-inclusivity-diversity>

Opinion: Rethinking Long Distance Railway Transport in Canada

<https://www.mironline.ca/rethinking-long-distance-railway-transport-in-canada/>

Radio: Last Stop for The Orangeville Brampton Railway

<https://omny.fm/shows/newstalk1010/last-stop-for-the-orangeville-brampton-railway>

Bidding a final farewell: Last train leaves Orangeville's station

<https://www.orangeville.com/news-story/10543813-bidding-a-final-farewell-during-the-railway-s-150th-anniversary-the-last-train-left-orangeville-s-station/>

More info on Calgary-Cochrane-Banff passenger rail transit expected in new year

<https://www.cochranetimes.com/news/local-news/more-info-on-calgary-cochrane-banff-passenger-rail-transit-expected-in-new-year>

Why Canada gets less for more when it comes to building transit

<https://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/why-canada-gets-less-for-more-when-it-comes-to-building-transit-1.5719903>

Metrolinx extends Presto contract with \$416 million award to Accenture

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2021/12/17/metrolinx-extends-presto-suppliers-contract-for-three-years-at-more-than-400-million-without-bidding-process-source.html>

Pembroke's Transit Feasibility Study proceeds to Phase 2

<https://www.thewhig.com/news/local-news/pembrokes-transit-feasibility-study-proceeding-to-phase-2>

Local governance approves Vernon, BC Regional Transit future action plan

<https://www.vernonmorningstar.com/news/local-governance-approves-vernon-regional-transit-future-action-plan/>

PC Connect to meet with Via, GO Transit to better align services

<https://ca.news.yahoo.com/pc-connect-meet-via-transit-203459997.html>

GIO Rail prepares to start service on CN Cayuga Subdivision

<https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/gio-rail-prepares-to-start-service-on-cn-cayuga-subdivision/>

NRT OnDemand transit service expands to Port Colborne, ON

<https://www.niagararegion.ca/news/article.aspx?news=1311>

Opinion: Canada needs to support green transportation links and First Nations businesses

<https://www.hilltimes.com/2021/12/27/canada-needs-to-support-green-transportation-links-and-first-nations-businesses/335439>

Inter Community Bus Travel Across Canada Seeks Federal Support

<https://www.netnewsledger.com/2021/12/30/inter-community-bus-travel-across-canada-seeks-federal-support/>

UK: GWR testing battery hybrid intercity train

<https://www.railadvent.co.uk/2021/11/gwr-intercity-train-to-under-battery-test-thanks-to-hitachi-and-everholt-rail.html>

USA: New River Valley Passenger Rail launches station feasibility survey

[https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger\\_rail/news/New-River-Valley-Passenger-Rail-launches-station-feasibility-survey--65522](https://www.progressiverailroading.com/passenger_rail/news/New-River-Valley-Passenger-Rail-launches-station-feasibility-survey--65522)

USA: MDOT wants to transform Detroit's 'cramped' Amtrak station into \$57M hub

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/technology/facilities/news/21250042/mi-mdot-wants-to-transform-detroits-cramped-amtrak-station-into-57m-hub-with-retail-more>

USA: Biden is spending \$1.2 trillion on infrastructure — here's what that means for Canada

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/biden-infrastructure-bill-canada-1.6288151>

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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!

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