



Transport Action News February 2022



The Chaleur - Photograph by [Dennis Jarvis](#)

Holding government accountable for passenger rail

Hello ,

This month we will be meeting with VIA Rail staff to discuss the Crown Corporation's latest five-year plan, and to seek some answers to our ongoing questions about details of the High Frequency Rail project, which appears to have stalled since the fall.

There's good news on the legislative front, with Elizabeth May MP reintroducing the VIA Rail Canada Act in Parliament. This private member's bill has come before the House of Commons many times, and keeps drawing attention to the importance of our national passenger railway network.

We have also made a written submission for Budget 2022, once again calling for a *Strategic Rail Infrastructure Fund* to improve both passenger services and freight movement across the country. [You can read the full document here.](#) Since our submission for Budget 2021 there

have been steps forward on the renewal of VIA Rail's long distance fleet, which we hope to see this budget allow VIA to start procurement for. The Huron Central Railway line has now been protected, but the urgency of reinstating train services on Vancouver Island has increased.

Transport Action continues dialogue with Transport Canada and Minister of Transport Omar Alghabra. The Minister's recent letter to Transport Action Ontario and our response can be found below.

As advocates for passengers and public transport throughout Canada, we sometimes have to call out actions by transit agencies may not be in the public interest. The recent untendered extension of the Presto fare card system contract, at a cost of more than \$400 million, seems to fall into that category and so Transport Action Ontario has asked the province's Auditor General to take a closer look at the circumstances surrounding that decision. (See story below.) That sum of money would have gone a long way toward helping transit services recover from the pandemic.

We also continue to work as part of the Keep Transit Moving coalition to encourage adequate funding to avoid transit service cuts that would stymie recovery from the pandemic. Thank you for continuing to support our efforts!



Terry Johnson, President
Transport Action Canada



VIA Rail Canada Act reintroduced in Parliament

Elizabeth May, MP for Saanich-Gulf Islands, has once again introduced the Via Rail Canada Act into Parliament as private member's bill C-236. The proposed bill's objective is to give VIA Rail a proper legislative mandate as a Crown Corporation,...

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Addressing VIA Rail Canada's role in passenger rail

In response to a letter from Transport Minister Alghabra, Transport Action Ontario has written back to the Minister outlining our thoughts and needed work on eight topics, summarized below; Expedited restoration of VIA Rail corridor services...

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Long-distance train fleet replacement inches forward

VIA Rail Canada has confirmed it is preparing a business case for the renewal of its aging long-haul locomotives and cars - some of which are more than 70 years old. The Crown corporation hosted a virtual "Market-Day" event with suppliers on...

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Bus proposal would link Grand River cities

ATU Canada and Unifor Local 4304 have teamed up with the Transit Advocacy Alliance of Guelph to develop a proposal that would provide frequent transit bus connections between Kitchener, Waterloo, Cambridge and Guelph; and between Cambridge and...

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Untendered Extension of Presto fare card contract

Transport Action Ontario has written Ontario's Auditor General (AG) expressing our concern about the recent Metrolinx untendered contact extension to Accenture for Presto card support. It is remarkable that this contract dates back to 2006 and...

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Transportation Newsround

Toronto's Bay Street Coach Terminal faces uncertain future

<https://www.thestar.com/life/together/places/2022/01/02/90-years-as-a-vital-transit-hub-whats-to-become-of-the-toronto-coach-terminal.html>

Cross-border rail tunnel passenger service moves step closer

<https://windsorstar.com/news/local-news/passenger-service-through-rail-tunnel-moves-step-closer>

BC Transit driver recognized for helping Kamloops senior travel safely in snow

<https://www.castanet.net/edition/news-story-356306-48-.htm>

Mayors along Calgary-Banff passenger rail to pen letter of support to province

<https://www.cochranetoday.ca/local-news/mayors-along-calgary-banff-passenger-rail-to-pen-letter-of-support-to-province-4943626>

Company behind Whitby's Olli autonomous shuttles ceases operations

<https://www.engadget.com/after-15-years-local-motors-will-reportedly-cease-operations-this-friday-224540158.html>

CN appoints Tracy Robinson as CEO, Jean Charest to board.

<https://www.railwaygazette.com/people/cn-appoints-next-ceo-as-board-changes-agreed/60816.article>

Calgary's new Green Line boss on the challenges ahead

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/calgarys-new-green-line-boss-on-the-challenges-ahead-for-the-4-9-billion-project>

Alberta Regional Rail proposes passenger train line across province

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8527994/alberta-regional-rail-passenger-train/>

PriestmanGoode designs accessible interiors for Canadian trains

<https://www.dezeen.com/2022/01/19/priestmangoode-accessible-interiors-corridor-trains-via-rail-canada/>

Hamilton transit users can expect some changes for 2022

<https://www.insauga.com/hamilton-transit-users-can-expect-some-changes-for-2022/>

Ontario launches Northern Transportation Task Force

<https://www.saultstar.com/news/rail-advocates-disappointed-another-task-force-charged-with-developing-northern-transportation-plan>

BC Transit to introduce contactless tap payment systems on buses

<https://www.cheknews.ca/bc-transit-to-introduce-contactless-tap-payment-systems-on-buses-944324/>

BC mayors call for extension of federal funding to keep transit moving

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8541008/b-c-mayors-federal-funding-public-transit/>

West Niagara OnDemand transit connection to Hamilton coming soon

<https://www.wellandtribune.ca/local-grimsby/news/2022/01/30/west-niagara-ondemand-connection-to-hamilton-coming-soon.html>

Two Ottawa LRT trains damaged in collision at Belfast Yard

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/trains-collide-belfast-yard-january-1.5440303>

Metro Vancouver mayors unanimously approve TransLink's Transport 2050 plan

<https://vancouver.citynews.ca/2022/01/27/mayors-council-transit-vote/>

USA: Interborough express between Brooklyn and Queens would use freight line

<https://gothamist.com/news/hochul-promises-inter-borough-express-rail-service-connect-brooklyn-and-queens>

USA: Keystone Corridor's Middletown Train Station project is complete, will begin seeing train service Jan. 10

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/technology/facilities/press-release/21252339/pennsylvania-office-of-the-governor-keystone-corridors-middletown-train-station-project-is-complete-will-begin-seeing-train-service-jan-10>

USA: UP purchases 20 battery-powered locos for yard service

<https://www.trains.com/trn/news-reviews/news-wire/up-announces-purchase-of-10-flxdrive-battery-electric-locomotives/>

USA Caltrain electrification celebrates milestone, expects to begin testing by summer

<https://www.masstransitmag.com/rail/infrastructure/press-release/21255109/caltrain-caltrain-celebrates-installation-of-final-foundation-for-electrification-project>

USA: Electric bus adoption increasing

<https://www.smartcitiesdive.com/news/more-electric-buses-arriving-in-city-transit-fleets/617072/>

Europe: Snälltåget launches seasonal night trains from Sweden to Austria

<https://www.railtech.com/infrastructure/2022/01/19/snalltaget-launches-seasonal-night-trains-to-austria/>

Germany: Alstom and DB start test operations with battery electric train

<https://www.railtech.com/infrastructure/2022/01/21/alstom-and-db-kick-off-test-operations-with-battery-electric-train/>

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.

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Now

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Thank you again for your continued support!

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