

## **Transport Action Canada**

(formerly Transport 2000 / anciennement Transport 2000 Canada)

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## **Calendar**

March 22: Federal budget

March 23-24: Québec City: TRAQ Railway Symposium: Hotel Plaza <http://www.groupe-traq.com>

April 2: Toronto: Transport Action Ontario AGM: Metro Hall (55 John St.) Details to be announced

April 27: Montebello : 2nd Symposium on rural transit for E. Ontario - W. Québec

28 et 29 avril : Montebello : Colloque

## **Cuts to Via Rail Canada: Transport Action urges members to express support passenger rail service**

On Feb. 2 National Post columnist John Ivison reported the government "plans to cut Via Rail's funding by \$65million, including \$31-million from its operating budget."

<http://www.nationalpost.com/More+spin+than+trim/4369260/story.html>

Later that day David Jeanes noted: "The actual situation is much more complex than just a \$65 million cut to VIA funding. The cut may in fact be much higher, as the \$65 million is just the net of a number of separate spending items, some of which are going up and some of which are going down. Much of it may be part of the government's wind-down of \$7 billion in stimulus funding for uncompleted projects. VIA may be a victim of the delays caused by CN, GEXR, etc, in spending the previously budgeted funds."

Jeanes noted: "The federal government's Main Estimates for 2011-2012 have been published. VIA Rail is to receive \$175,328,000 to cover operating expenses, and \$282,981,000 for capital projects for a total of \$458,309,000. This is down from \$523,721,000 in 2010-2011.

The Main Estimates (aka Blue Books) for 2011-2012 itemize the cuts:

"A decrease in planned spending of \$65.4 million is comprised of a decreased of \$34.2 million in capital funds and a decrease of \$31.2 million in operating funds. The major changes are:

\* An increase of \$76.8 million as a results of project delays arising from delays in starting capital projects;

\* An increase of \$40.3 million as a result of the acceleration of Budget 2007 initiatives;

\* A decrease of \$163.1 million as a result of decreases in the reference level for some operating and capital projects introduced in the Budget 2007 and Budget 2009; and

\* A decrease of \$19.0 million from the reprofiling of Economic Action Plan funds from 2011-12 to 2010-11 to accelerate progress on some projects."

David Jeanes said: "We have to understand what this means in terms of specific cancelled or delayed capital projects and what the pressure on operating funds means to VIA's level of service. It sounds as though some belt tightening has been in the works since Marc Lalibierté took over at VIA. I welcome

any further insights into what this all means and what our specific response should be. "One question is whether VIA is actually losing permanently part of the capital funding announced in previous budgets. If it is just that the previously budgeted capital has mostly been spent, then we should be advocating for new capital funding," Jeanes said.

Estimates are based on figures supplied by individual ministries, Transport in the case of Via. The Ministry of Finance can change the March 22 budget numbers. Transport Action is urging members to express support for Canada's passenger rail service. The watchdog group will make a more definitive set of recommendations next week.

### **Transport Action Ontario: Transit Priorities for Toronto: More Subways and LRTs**

"Congestion is reaching the breaking point for transit riders, motorists and businesses alike – what should the province and the TTC build to begin a solution? Transport Action Ontario (TA-Ontario) wants a transit network that works and is cost effective, not just now, but for the long-term," Transport Action Ontario said in updated report release on March 2.

Transport Action Ontario priority issues are:

1. the central Eglinton Crosstown LRT tunnel must be built now, but with a subway-compatible design and new demand projections for the eastern section before approving more tunnelling,
2. the Yonge subway is overcapacity now which can only be solved with an early decision to design and build an Eastern Relief subway Line (ERL) from the Don Mills area to downtown,
3. Scarborough needs rapid transit along Sheppard Ave NOW, not in 10 to 15 years' time,
4. the Scarborough RT urgently requires a replacement, and
5. detailed planning for a Finch West line must proceed.

The report is at: <http://www.jgoss.com/transportaction/SubwaysLRTsforToronto.doc>

### **Good sense prevailing says Mike Perry, Transport Action Atlantic Vice-President**

"The Mackay Highway expansion between Saint John and Rothesay may have reached a dead end. ... The former Liberal government signed a contract last year to expand the highway between Rothesay and Saint John. It was part of the \$580-million Route 1 Gateway project that leads to the United States, and it would have been the first six-lane highway in the province," CBC News reported on Feb. 24. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/story/2011/02/24/nb-mackay-highway-expansion-dead.html>

Transport Action Atlantic Vice-President Mike Perry comments: "Good sense may be prevailing at last!". Saint John mayor, Ivan Court, and other city politicians have opposed highway expansion, arguing it will support urban sprawl and cut the city tax base. Other residents along the highway have said the problem is not highway lanes, but congestion at the exits.

### **Ontario government proclaims double-trailer monster trucks a success: No data, no studies, no costing**

"The LCV Pilot Program has been a success,"(Emna Dhahak Ministry of Transportation spokesperson) declared. ... The provincial government has quietly removed the 'pilot' tag from Ontario's long combination vehicle (LCV) program while doubling the number of carriers that can participate. "The ministry is moving forward with a limited expansion of the Long Combination Vehicles (LCV) Program starting in March 2011," Emna Dhahak, senior bilingual media liaison officer with the Ministry of Transportation confirmed to Trucknews.com. She said that to date, 80 permits have been issued to 40

carriers. This year, an additional 40 fleets will receive two permits each, Dhahak added, effectively doubling the number of carriers involved in the program as well as the number of LCVs approved for travel in Ontario," James Menzies reported for Truck News on Feb. 25.

<http://www.trucknews.com/issues/story.aspx?aid=1000403160&ref=rss>

### **Ottawa LRT system under the chopping block**

"How do you design a for the nation's capital? It would appear you design something pretty, pick a budget number virtually out of thin air and when the two don't align, you start cutting from your pretty little picture. That appears to be the fate of the city's light rail system, which is now undergoing a "Design to Budget" process," Susan Sherring reported for the Ottawa Sun on March 2. "Seems the \$2.1-billion (light rail) budget isn't near enough to cover what city staff have designed. It's too far down the road to start all over, so the chopping has begun," the Ottawa Sun reported.

[http://www.ottawasun.com/news/columnists/susan\\_sherring/2011/03/02/17471226.html](http://www.ottawasun.com/news/columnists/susan_sherring/2011/03/02/17471226.html)

A Transport Action source notes: "Council seems to be in a tizzy about the timing of the project and feels that no progress is being made. Interestingly enough staff has stuck exactly to the timelines that they said were required and that Council approved when they gave the go ahead. I find more interesting the decision to shorten the tunnel near Laurier Avenue. ... There was no functional reason for the tunnel to run as far as Mann Avenue and that it should emerge in the area of the Campus Station. (It was) also stated several times that the station at Bayview should be simplified to a basic T intersection to save money instead of the rather elaborate method proposed by the consultants. I am pleased to see that staff is coming to the same conclusion. Lastly (Ottawa planner) Ms. Schepers has made it crystal clear from the start that their budget numbers were based in current dollars at the time of approval and would be subject to inflation. For Councillors to now be surprised by this and by the timelines is simply disingenuous."

### **Musée ferroviaire dans l'Est du Québec : Charny**

Mon nom est Louis-François Garceau et je suis conservateur du Musée ferroviaire de Charny, Ville de Lévis. Notre Musée est ouvert au public les premiers samedis de chaque mois, entre 10 h 00 et 16 h 00. Nous sommes situés à l'entrée de Charny, juste derrière l'Aquaréna.

On peut stationner à l'Aquaréna sur la rue Maréchal-Joffre et marcher jusqu'au Musée; soit, environ 700 pieds (notre stationnement est restreint). Nous sommes localisés au 5314, avenue des Belles-Amours à Charny, suites 103 et 104. Nous avons huit pièces différentes contenant du matériel (sur deux étages) et c'est pour cela que des bénévoles sauront vous guider lors de votre visite.

### **US study finds increasing truck size limits would choke roads**

A new Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) study concludes that allowing bigger trucks - as proposed by H.R. 763 and others - would attract 7-18 million more heavy trucks to our nation's highways," the Coalition Against Bigger Trucks reported on Feb. 22.

"According to an October 2010 study done by Carl Martland, Research Affiliate in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering at MIT, allowing 97,000-pound, six-axle trucks could add 7.8 million truck trips worth of freight on the nation's highways. Allowing longer combination vehicles (LCVs) – long double- and triple-trailer trucks – could add 17.4 million truck trips worth of freight onto our highways," Coalition Against Bigger Trucks reported. Please email [yvassel@cabt.org](mailto:yvassel@cabt.org) for a copy of the Martland study.

### **Le Colloque et son RAILSHOW annuel**

Le Groupe TRAQ organise un Colloque ferroviaire annuel pour le Québec. Cette année, il en est à sa quinzième édition. Il tient également une Exposition annuelle de fournisseurs de matériel et d'équipement ferroviaires et réunit, différents paliers de gouvernement, de nombreux CFILs (Chemins de fer d'intérêt local, environ 25 œuvrent présentement au Québec) et, occasionnellement, des administrateurs des chemins de fer de classe 1 (CN, CP, VIA Rail). Plusieurs chemins de fer industriels participent également à ces activités annuelles.

### **Manitoba farmers hoping to roll into the railroad business**

"Canadian Pacific is planning to stop using nearly 100 kilometers of track between the communities of Rathwell and Nesbitt, along Highway 2 in Western Manitoba. But local farmers want to keep the trains running to transport their grain," CTV Winnipeg reported on Feb. 28. "It's an alternative to marketing grain," says Harold Purkess, president of River Hills Railroad. He believes owning the track would allow farmers to load their grain onto railcars and have it shipped more easily. So far, more than 100 members have raised about \$1 million," CTV Winnipeg reported.

[http://winnipeg.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110228/wpg\\_rail\\_road\\_110228/20110228/?hub=WinnipegHome](http://winnipeg.ctv.ca/servlet/an/local/CTVNews/20110228/wpg_rail_road_110228/20110228/?hub=WinnipegHome)

### **Hausse de tarifs pour la navette de l'Est ontarien**

« La navette en autocar entre l'Est ontarien et Ottawa coûtera plus cher aux usagers à partir du 1er avril. Transport-Est ontarien (TEO) a annoncé hier que le laissez-passer mensuel augmentera de 25 \$, tandis que les billets uniques et les laissez-passer pour multiples autobus subiront un sort similaire. À l'heure actuelle, le coût du populaire laissez-passer mensuel varie entre 235 \$ à 305 \$ par mois, selon le trajet. « Les augmentations des coûts aux usagers n'ont pas été décidées à la légère. Ne rien faire aurait conduit à l'annulation des services. L'existence du système de transport collectif était donc en jeu », explique Bob Proulx, directeur général de TEO » Jean-François Dugas a rapporté pour Le Droit le 28 février. [http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/ottawa-est-ontarien/201102/28/01-4374802-hausse-de-tarifs-pour-la-navette-de-lest-ontarien.php?utm\\_categorieinterne=trafficdrivers](http://www.cyberpresse.ca/le-droit/actualites/ottawa-est-ontarien/201102/28/01-4374802-hausse-de-tarifs-pour-la-navette-de-lest-ontarien.php?utm_categorieinterne=trafficdrivers)

### **highspeedrail.ca: Langan to address TRAQ symposium**

High Speed Rail Canada has posted a study from Europe on high speed train operation in winter climates and a new USA opinion survey that states almost 2/3 of Americans support money being allocated to high speed rail. There is a fantastic France TGV 5 minute video on the front page the site. <http://highspeedrail.ca/>

High Speed Rail Canada founder Paul Langan will be speaking at the TRAQ symposium in Quebec City March 23/24. <http://www.groupe-traq.com/colloque/symposium.html>

### **High-speed rail 'will make £44bn for Britain'**

"A speed rail network linking major cities across Britain will be worth £44 billion to the country, Philip Hammond, the Transport Secretary has said. ... Launching a five-week consultation into the plans to build the first phase of the project, linking London to the West Midlands, Mr Hammond said the line was "vital to the prosperity of future generations," David Millward reported for the Telegraph on Feb. 28. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/road-and-rail-transport/8352235/High-speed-rail-will-make-44bn-for-Britain.html>

### **Ontario legislature debates rail electrification: Clean Train Coalition**

The Legislative Assembly of Ontario Hansard transcript for Feb. 24 reports "Mrs. Laura Albanese: I move that, in the opinion of this House, the province embrace electrification as a strategy for powering commuter rail by:

- acknowledging that the Georgetown South corridor be declared a priority corridor for electrification of commuter trains, recognizing its high residential density;
- ensuring that the environmental assessment for electrification become consistent with current timelines of the six-month transit environmental assessment;
  - including human health and property impacts in the environmental assessment for electrification;
- completing the electrification of the air-rail link by 2015; and
- calling on all levels of government to partner in funding electrification infrastructure improvements.

<http://tinyurl.com/6zxys6p>

### **The war on the war on cars: David Suzuki**

"We humans like our wars. We have a war on drugs, a war on terror, a war on crime, and now, it seems, a war on cars. The latter "war" has entered the political vocabulary in Vancouver, where city council has been trying to reduce reliance on private automobiles; in Toronto, where the mayor is driving the agenda in the opposite direction; and in Seattle, where bike lanes and increased parking fees have come under fire," David Suzuki and Faisal Moola wrote for Postmedia News on March 2.

<http://www.canada.com/there+cars+which+side+winning+Look+cities/4369035/story.html>

"In Vancouver, opponents and local media predicted "chaos" from a bike lane on the Burrard Bridge, which connects the city's downtown with the West Side. After the chaos failed to emerge, opponents, rather than learning from experience, went on to predict the same thing for other bike lanes in the city, mostly in the downtown core. Despite a few bumps, the chaos has yet to reveal itself. At the same time, the provincial government is spending \$3 billion on a new 10-lane bridge and expanded highways to move cars and trucks in and out of the city," the Postmedia news story said.

<http://www.davidsuzuki.org>

### **New York City: Home of the war on the car**

"There's more than 1,500,000,000 square feet of street space in New York City. According to Streetsblog's rough estimates, using generous assumptions or the square footage of recent street changes, less than one half of one percent of NYC's street network has been allocated to bikes, buses, and pedestrians under (NYC DOT chief) Janette Sadik-Khan. The city's war on automobiles has just gone aerial," screamed the New York Post in a recent story about speed cameras. A Daily News op-ed in support of safety improvements proclaimed "the battle against cars has saved lives." The Times matter-of-factly declared last month that "New York City has gone out of its way in recent years to cater to the nonmotorized." No matter where you get your news, you'd be forgiven for thinking that the last three and a half years have been a time of revolutionary frenzy on the city's streets," Noah Kazis wrote for streetsblog on March 1.

"While the DOT under Janette Sadik-Khan has made incredibly important steps to improve safety and mobility for New Yorkers, the truth is that the overwhelming majority of New York City's streets remain about the same," streetsblog reported. <http://www.streetsblog.org/2011/03/01/there-is-no-war-on-cars/>

<http://www.transport-action.ca>

Please circulate.