

National Dream Renewed:

Untapping the Potential of Canada's Rail Passenger Service

Sault Ste. Marie & Wawa

Town Hall Workshops

February 19th & 20th, 2014



About Transport Action

- Founded in 1976 as Canada's only nationwide public transportation education and advocacy association
- Led the campaign for creation of VIA in 1977
- Launched donor-supported ***National Dream Renewed*** project in response to VIA cuts

About VIA Rail

- Set up to take over and improve CN and CP passenger trains
- Services from Atlantic to Pacific to Hudson Bay
- VIA is subsidized -- like air and highways
- Federal funding only
- No legislation on rights, obligations and budgets

Remote regional services

- Special federal financial support
- Keewatin Railway MB - service – First Nation
- Tseushin Railway T-N & L - service First Nation
- Ontario Northland – service **withdrawn** by Ontario
- Algoma Central – finance **withdrawn** by fédéral

VIA Rail Cutbacks



- Major cuts to service in 1981, 1990 and 2012
- Frozen budget to be further reduced
- Service cuts part of “modernization” and “evolution”
- More cuts in 2013 and 2014
- Fed review threatens VIAs existence



No Public Hearings or Input

Examples of actions

- ACR 1990s – public reaction : train saved
- Vancouver Isld. – Foundation : line saved (freight)
- Sault – Sudbury – Huron Central kept and rebuilt
- Coalition N.-B.+ Gaspé - Provinces contribute \$
- Maine : Train cut in 1970s – Restored by State

Why Passenger Trains

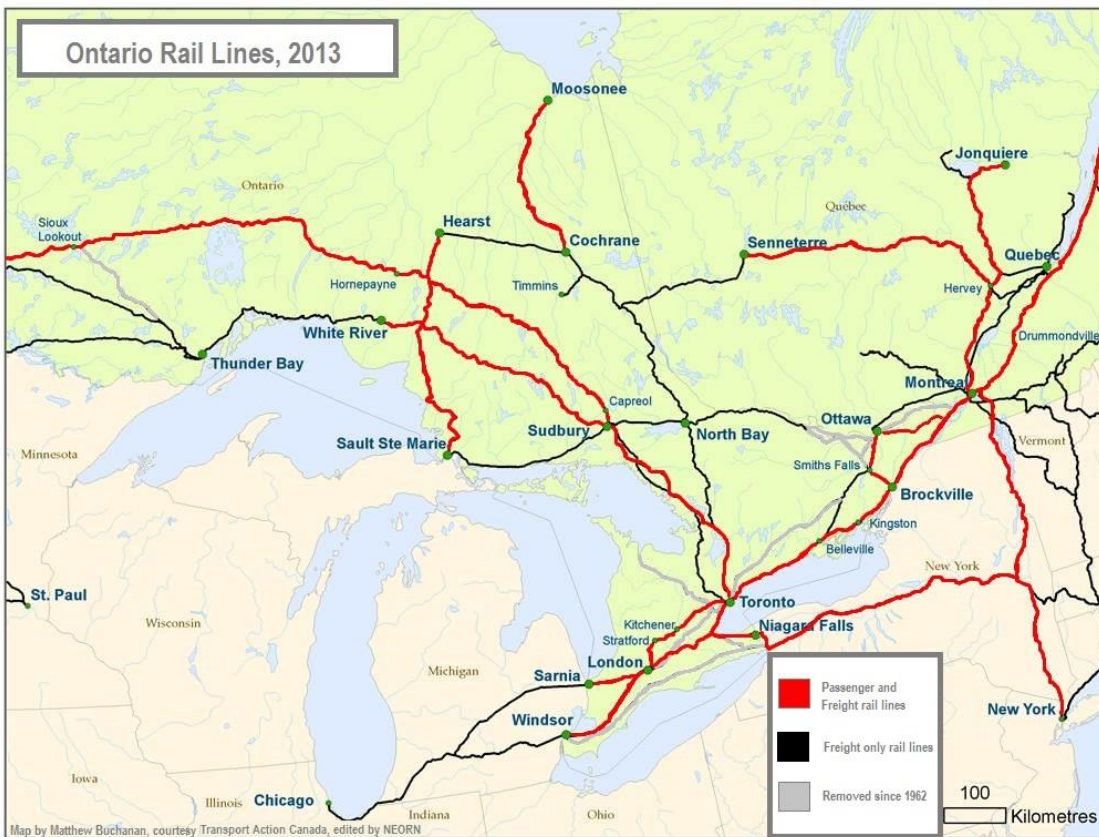
- Cost effective (if modernized and well managed)
- Generates Canadian jobs, tax revenue and economic activity. Provides access to regions.
- Hedges against uncertain oil prices and availability. Protects environment.
- Contributes to national unity, safety and security



Canadian Rail Passenger System 1962



Canadian Rail Passenger System 2012



Réseau voyageurs ON

6 Pillars of a Modern, Affordable, Sustainable Rail Passenger network

- Route Network and Service Levels
- Fares and Marketing
- Fleet Strategy
- Funding and Budgets
- Management
- Governance and Public Accountability

Routes and Service Levels

- Do VIA's or ACR services meet the needs of Algoma?
- Would you use trains more if there was more service?
- To which cities would you most want to travel on an improved rail network?



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Fares and Marketing

Frequently Heard Complaints

- “VIA is too expensive”
- “It’s hard to get information”
- “VIA advertising never mentions our routes”
- “I never hear or see VIA ads”

What about the ACR?

VIA's Fleet Strategy

- There is **no strategy**
- Four types of trains used by VIA for services across the country
- **All** four types are **old**, slated for modernization, but snarled up by bankruptcy and production problems

VIA LRC Corridor Trains



© Raymond S. Farand

VIA Renaissance Trains



© David Othen

VIA Budd Locomotive-Hauled Trains

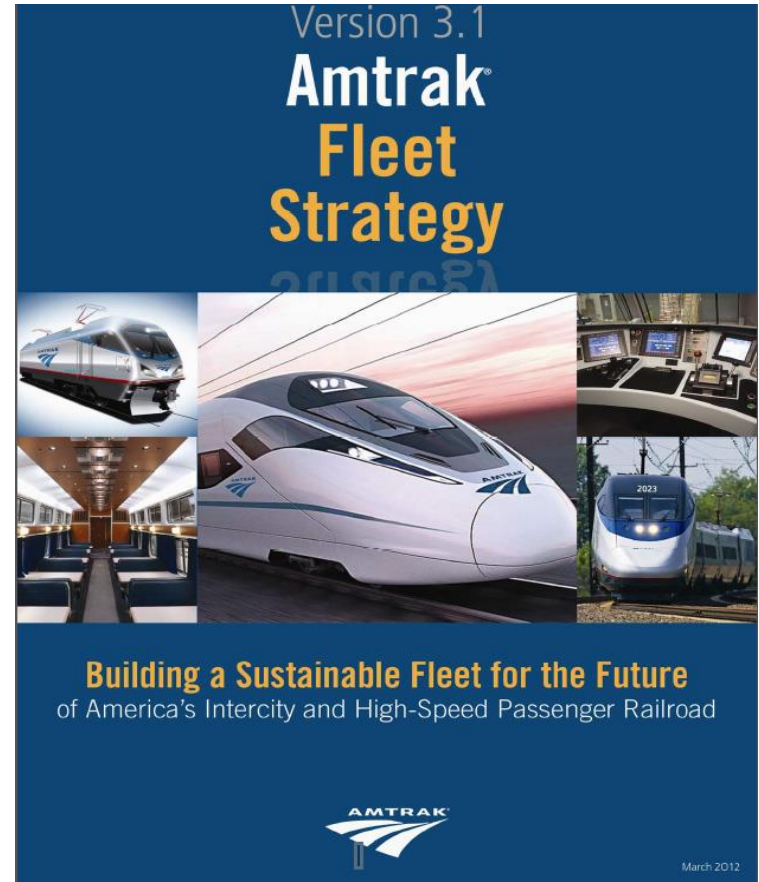


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VIA Budd Rail Diesel Cars



Amtrak's Fleet Strategy



Amtrak Bi-Level Trains



Amtrak Corridor Talgo Trains



© Andy Cassidy

GO Toronto Air Rail Link DMU



VIA's Funding and Budgets

- Subsidy **frozen** in 1998 at \$166 million
- Little capital investment since 1977
- Feds approved \$923 million for capital renewal -- mostly for Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal and modernization of old equipment

VIA's Funding and Budgets

- VIA costs every taxpayer about one coffee a month
- **Every** rail passenger service worldwide requires government subsidy
- Air and highways **also** subsidized



Management – board (VIA)

- Appointed by Cabinet, not answerable to Parliament
- Headquarters at Place Ville Marie, Montreal
- Management team too big vs. employees

ACR/CN remote head office – private enterprise

VIA's Governance/Accountability

- No legislation on VIA's rights, obligations, objectives and budgets = ACR
- VIA reports to Cabinet through three ministries = ACR + another level- CN
- VIA is only required to make a **limited** amount of data available to public and MPs - ACR even less

Governance/Accountability

- VIA or CN can make service changes **without** public hearings
- VIA's budget is set by Cabinet (ACR aussi)
- VIA has few rights on CN, CP freight railway tracks – ACR?

Amtrak's

Governance/Accountability

- Amtrak is under legislation and is **accountable** for meeting goals approved by Congress
- Amtrak reports to Congress
- Amtrak must operate “transparently”

Amtrak's Governance/Accountability

- Amtrak must justify service changes to Congress
- Amtrak's budget is approved by Congress
- Amtrak's legislation spells out obligations of freight railways towards Amtrak

Where Do We Go from Here?



Next Steps: Keep VIA Rolling

- Citizens: Write or call your elected officials
- Petitions – submit via MPs e.g. Hyer, Toone, +
- Mayors, organizations: Work together
- NEORN - CAPT: Produce a blueprint

Thank You!



Keep in touch with us at:

www.nationaldreamrenewed.com



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