



Intercity Public Transportation in Ontario – Benefits, Challenges and Solutions

CFUW Panel Session on “Getting There: Integrated
Public Transportation for Ontario”

Peter Miasek

Transport Action Ontario

January 24, 2015

www.transport-action-ontario.com

Background on Transport Action Ontario

- Long-standing non-government organization (NGO) advocating for sustainable transportation
 - Formerly known as Transport 2000
- Part of the Transport Action group of affiliated NGOs
 - Atlantic Canada
 - Quebec (Transport 2000 Quebec)
 - Prairies
 - British Columbia
 - National office in Ottawa
- Involved in numerous areas of transportation:
 - Urban Transit
 - Intercity Passenger Rail and Bus
 - Freight movement
 - New Highway Projects
 - Airports

“Megatrends” that are Driving the Need for more Intercity Public Transportation*

(* rail spine + bus feeder)

- Highway congestion
- Numerous demographics prefer rail/bus
- Corporate desire for multi-modal connectivity
- Increased US passenger rail (AMTRAK) investment, offering connectivity
- Cost of auto ownership
- Cost of highway construction and maintenance
- Environmental – GHG, emissions, land use

DESPITE THESE TRENDS:

- Rail network shrinking
 - Canada is the only G8 country not investing heavily in intercity passenger rail
 - US passenger rail boardings have grown steadily over last 10 years
- Bus network shrinking

Ontario Passenger Rail Network in 1962



Ontario Passenger Rail Network in 2012



Southwestern Ontario Rail Passenger Service Frequency

Weekday Round Trips to/from Toronto (VIA Rail Canada)

CITY	1977	1982	1988	1990	2013
Stratford	5	5	4	2	2
London	13	15	12	7	7
Windsor	5	6	4	4	4
Sarnia	4	4	3	2	1
Niagara Falls	3	3	3	2	1

Amtrak Capital Corridor vs. VIA North Main Line

Amtrak's Capital Corridor

15 trains weekdays

0 km San Francisco 805K

0-km Oakland  391K

10-km Emeryville

11-km Berkeley  113K

21-km Richmond 104K

56-km Martinez 36K
[Vallejo 116K]

81-km Fairfield 105K

122-km Davis  66K

 145-km Sacramento 2.0M

VIA's North Main Line

2 trains weekdays


 0-km Toronto 2.6M

24-km Malton 

34-km Brampton 524K

79-km Guelph  141K

101-km K-W-C  477K

143-km Stratford  31K

 195-km London  475K

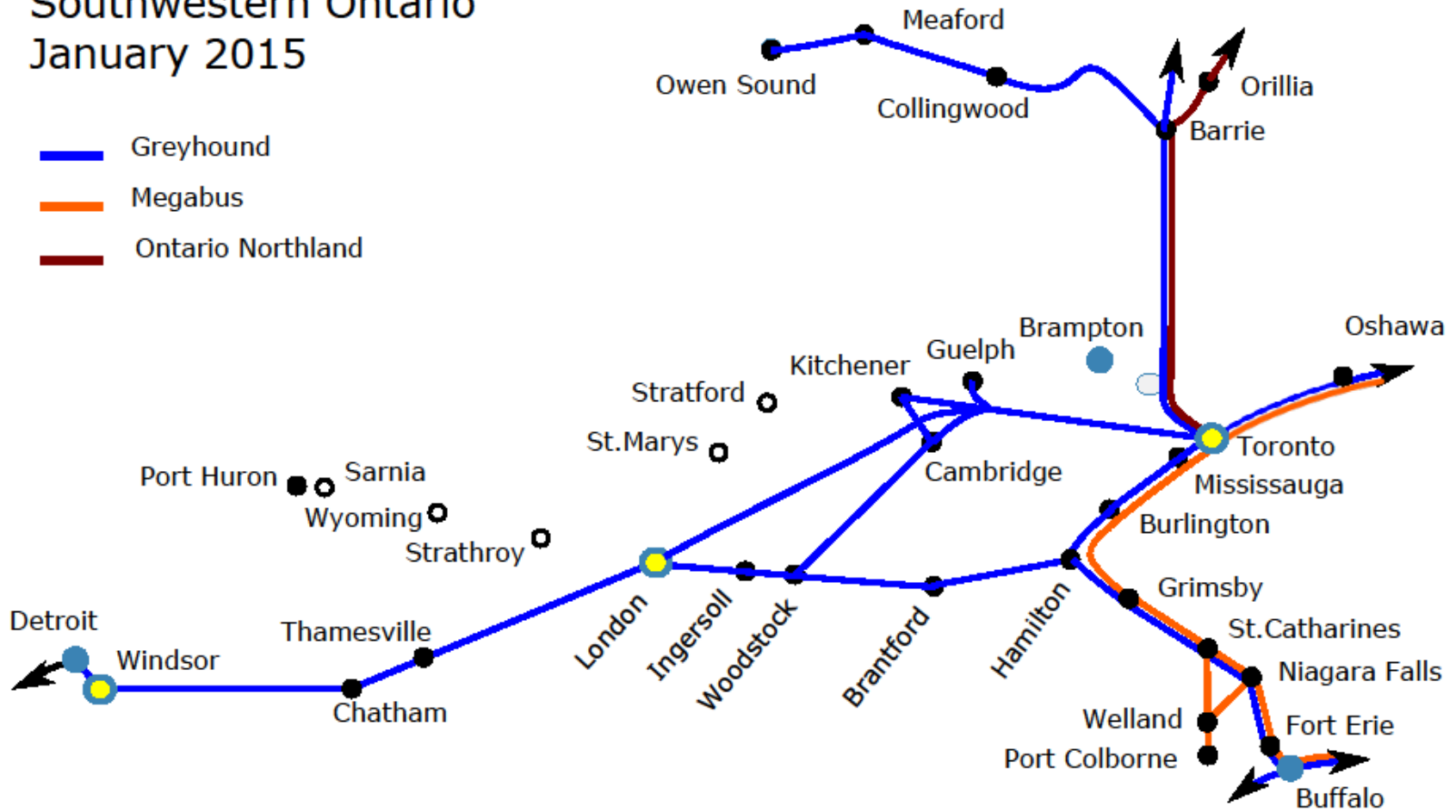
>> 290-km Sarnia 89.6K

Challenges Facing Intercity Passenger Rail

- No federal legislative mandate for VIA Rail
 - Rights, obligations, user charges, network, standards
 - USA legislation establishing AMTRAK would be a good model
- Systemic underfunding versus other G8 countries
 - VIA Rail federal cutback 2012 – many frequency reductions across Canada
 - Ontario Northland Railway – service discontinued south of Cochrane
 - Algoma Central Railway – service threatened Sault to Hearst
- Schedule issues from lack of capacity on over-stretched freight lines
 - Decades of underinvestment due to non-level playing field with trucking
 - Branch line under-maintenance or abandonment
 - Pinchpoints in GTHA, eg Brampton to Georgetown on CN Halton Sub
- Interface with GO Transit
- OVERARCHING – No federal transportation policy, especially rail

Intercity Motor Coach Routes Southwestern Ontario January 2015

- Greyhound
- Megabus
- Ontario Northland



Bus Connections to Rail

- Goal – seamless intercity bus and urban transit connections at train stations. Integrated fares.

<u>Rail Spine</u>	<u>Intercity Bus Connection Routes</u>
AMTRAK Capital Corridor (San Jose – Sacramento)	8 Routes (Thruway service) (can also buy urban transit pass as part of AMTRAK ticket)
VIA Rail North Main Line (Toronto – KW - London)	Nil
GO Transit Lakeshore East (Toronto - Oshawa)	7 Routes (GO Bus) (can also buy urban transit ticket for small extra cost except in Toronto)

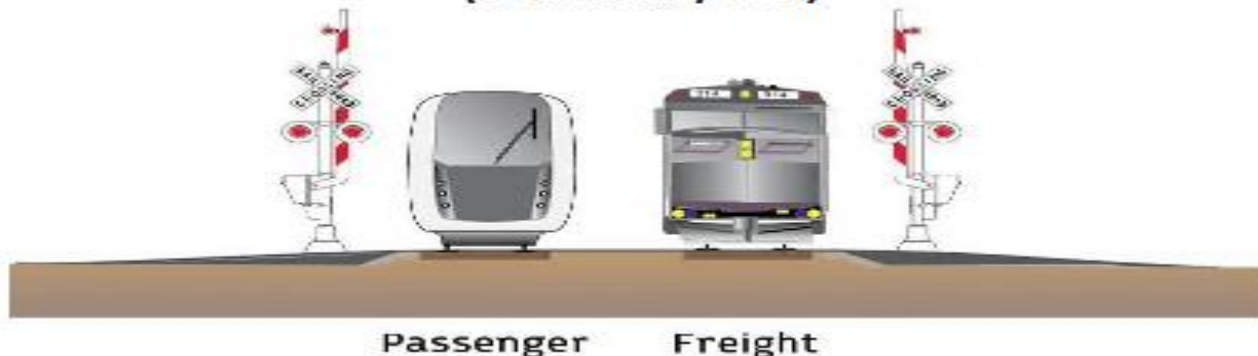
Challenges Facing Intercity Bus Industry in Ontario (preliminary)

- Substantial shrinkage in intercity bus network
 - Some glimmers of hope (MegaBus to Niagara Peninsula)
- Regulated system under Ontario Highway Transportation Board
 - Franchise/cross subsidy model
- Council of Deputy Ministers Intercity Bus Service Task Force Report, 2010
 - Relax regulatory regime
 - Modest subsidy programs
 - Smaller vehicles
- Private carriers (Greyhound, Pacific Western, Coach Canada) not in consensus on need to modernize regulatory regime
- All private carriers want level playing field with GO Transit
- Mandate Letter to Kathryn McGarry, MPP, Parliamentary Assistant to Minister of Transportation includes
 - “supporting the ongoing development of recommendations on modernizing and appropriately regulating the intercity bus regime”

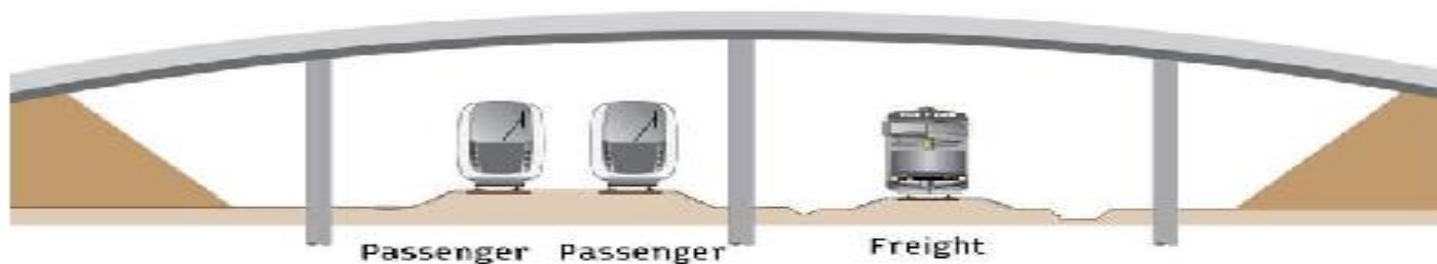
Opportunities for Passenger Rail and Bus

- VIA Rail Canada Act, private members Bill C-640
 - sponsored by Philip Toone, MP Gaspésie-Iles-de-la-Madelaine
 - Good first pass at establishing VIA's rights and obligations
 - Tabled in House of Commons December, 2014
 - Unlikely to pass
- Canada Transportation Act review
 - Submissions were due December, 2014
 - Panel report to Minister December, 2015
- Upcoming federal election
- Provincial interest in High Speed Rail (HSR) for Southwestern Ontario linking Toronto and London/Windsor
 - Environmental Assessment initiated, but will take years to implement the project
 - There is an immediate need to improve conventional rail/bus as a stepping stone to HSR = **OPPORTUNITY**
- Southwestern Ontario has best potential for rail/bus improvements – highway congestion, population density, destinations

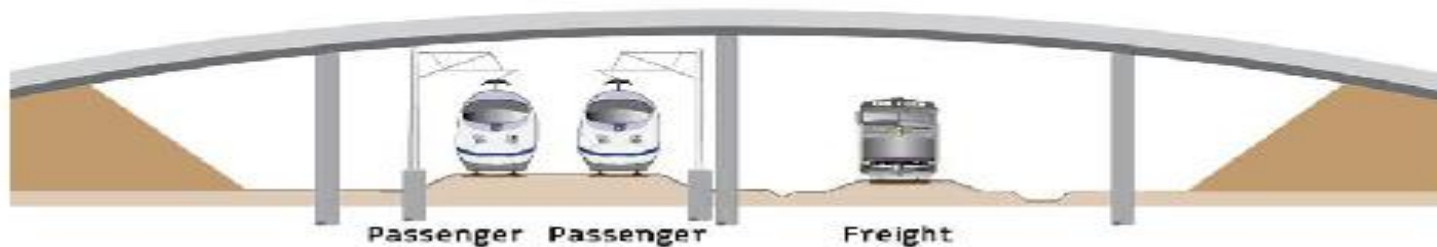
CONVENTIONAL RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE
(UP TO 160 KM/HOUR)



HIGH-PERFORMANCE RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE
(160-200 KM/HOUR)



HIGH-SPEED RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE
(MORE THAN 200 KM/HOUR)



Network Southwest



Network Southwest

- Joint project of various NGOs in Southwestern Ontario
- A concept plan outlining a four year passenger improvement plan
 - Intercity rail and bus (spine + feeder)
 - Largely existing infrastructure and equipment (conventional rail)
 - Practical and affordable
- To be released in Sarnia, January 31
- Intended for use at Town Hall meetings across Southwest Ontario
 - Slide presentation and report
 - Goal is to inform residents, elected officials and media
- Other Town Hall meetings scheduled in St Marys and Stratford
- We are looking for opportunities to present in your municipality **Let Us Know!**

THANK YOU!