

**ON-LINE SUBMISSION by PETER MIASEK, PRESIDENT, TRANSPORT  
ACTION ONTARIO to TRANSPORT CANADA SURVEY at**

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## **The Future of Transportation in Canada: Developing a Long-term Agenda for Transportation**

**Transport Canada believes listening to Canadians will help us better fulfil our mandate, deliver programs, launch new initiatives and build public trust.**

**Giving Canadians, our stakeholders and industry experts more opportunities to get involved will give us new perspectives and identify the public's concerns and values. This knowledge leads to more creative solutions, more effective policies and better decisions.**

**Sharing your views on the following main elements will help us develop a long-term agenda for the future of transportation in Canada.**

### **Bottom of Form**

#### **Safer Transportation**

**A safe transportation system is vital to the life of the country. Where are the opportunities to improve to transportation safety in all modes?**

#### **Comments:**

With little evidence that the incidence of derailments and runaway trains/railcars has decreased since the Lac-Mégantic disaster, it appears that there is still a serious lack of adequate oversight of rail safety in Canada. We need stricter regulation and enforcement of the rules – and a zero-tolerance policy for infractions.

#### **Trade Corridors to Global Markets**

**Efficient and connected transportation systems for moving goods to market is important for our economy. What should be the key priorities to increase Canada's competitive position as a trading nation? What transportation policies and public/private partnerships could bring the greatest results for Canadians?**

#### **Comments:**

Governments at all levels have lavished huge expenditures on highway infrastructure for the past seven decades, to the near total neglect of rail corridors. To improve their bottom line, railways have abandoned main and branch lines, eliminated significant double track, and removed numerous passing tracks. Meanwhile, more and more heavy traffic that could and should be moving by rail has been diverted to an already-overloaded highway system. It's time to rethink public policy, and give serious revision to what gives best value for public investment in transportation corridors.

## **Green and Innovative Transportation**

**What new approaches and technologies do you believe will help Canada reduce the impact of transportation on the environment? What new technologies and innovative practices do you believe will help Canada improve transportation safety and security, move people and goods more efficiently, reduce congestion, and provide new solutions for traffic and transportation needs of cities?**

### **Comments:**

#### **(a) Rail**

Canada needs to consider creating a modern national rail network, beginning with High Performance Rail (HPR) in the Windsor-Quebec City corridor. Based on successful USA experience, HPR is a proven middle ground between VIA's current service, which largely operates on tracks it shares with freight trains, and high-speed rail, which operates on all-new electrified lines that must be built from scratch at a very high cost. HPR incrementally improves all aspects of the existing conventional rail service and builds on public funds that have already been invested in it. Operating at progressively higher speeds with modern cars and locomotives, HPR offers increased frequency, reduced travel times, enhanced comfort, better on-time performance, improved stations and more and better connections to local transit. Additionally, it still maintains adequate capacity for efficient movement of freight. For further information on HPR, check the Transport Action Ontario website [www\(dot\)transport-action-ontario\(dot\)com](http://www.transport-action-ontario.com). HPR could be a federal-provincial initiative, with municipalities invited to contribute where the tracks pass within their boundaries and in providing passenger station infrastructure and local intermodal terminals.

The rail initiative should also include government assistance outside the Quebec-Windsor corridor to major railways in building and maintaining passing tracks to facilitate the efficient movement of both passengers and freight, and to shortlines to ensure their continued viability as feeders to the national network.

For discussion on remote parts of Canada, see response to that question, below.

Governments should develop policy initiatives that would maximize the use of rail for long and medium haul bulk and intermodal traffic. This will undoubtedly require public

infrastructure investment – just as is the case with the highway and air modes. And call it investment – not subsidy!

### **(b) Urban Transit**

Canada needs to continue to invest in urban transit, but under a more defined program. . Canada is the only G8 country without a coordinated national framework of policies and programs for funding expansion and renewal of transit systems. Other countries have National Transit Strategies that provide predictable, transparent long term federal funding for transit.

## **The Traveller - The Passenger**

**How can the transportation sector better meet travellers' needs and expectations for safe, secure, accessible and affordable travel?**

### **Comments:**

Government support to the rail passenger mode has been sadly lacking for the past 60 years. Yes, there has been public money spent on operating subsidies and piece-meal capital expenditures from time to time, but there has been a serious absence of clear public policy.

- Begin by creating a long overdue legislative framework for VIA Rail Canada. This was cited in the Kieran MAS backgrounder to the Emerson report as a key need.

- Under federal government leadership, bring the country's two major railways to the table to develop a workable plan for a national network that allows for efficient freight and passenger service from coast to coast, including review of the costing formula for VIA trackage rights (as per Kieran). This would form the basis of a long-term plan as recommended by the Auditor General.

- Re-equip VIA Rail with modern rolling stock, designed for all-weather year-round service under Canadian conditions.

- Establish frequent, higher speed passenger service (High Performance Rail) between main population centres and smaller communities in the Windsor-Quebec City corridor, including coordinated feeder bus service, and adequate and convenient connections to Atlantic Canada, northern Ontario, and the West. Explore HPR services between the major cities of western Canada.

## **Waterways, Coasts and the North**

**How can the marine transportation system support economic growth while protecting coastal communities and the environment?**

**In Canada's northernmost regions, what transportation improvements are most needed to safely and sustainably support basic community access and unlock their economic growth potential?**

**Comments:**

**(a) Surface Transportation in Northern Ontario**

In Northern Ontario, the transportation network is suffering from a level of neglect & fragmentation; which has resulted in an increased level of isolation of the communities located in the geographical heart of Canada. The residents of this region, who find themselves without access to a vehicle, are left with fewer & fewer reliable inter-city transportation options with each passing year.

Since 2012, Northern Ontario has seen the elimination of much passenger train service, the abandonment & removal of multiple shortline, regional & transcontinental railroads; the elimination or suspension of nine motor coach routes on the Trans-Canada highways and cuts in direct scheduled flight service between Northern Ontario communities & Ottawa.

Northern Ontario has a road network that is increasingly fragile due to climate change, natural disasters & automobile collisions. Between 2011 & 2014, the Northeastern portion of the province experienced a total of 674 highway closures. With the lack of a grid-like road network as found in Southern Ontario, residents & travelers are simply unable to circumvent road closures due to accidents, weather related incidents, forest fires, floods and in some instances, sink holes. As a consequence for a lack of road-based transportation alternatives, Northern Ontario communities are left with little to no transportation options when disaster strikes.

This is an unacceptable situation in a developed nation like Canada.

Utilizing the existing rail corridor infrastructure, the federal government must provide equitable reinvestments in passenger train services to what is being provided elsewhere in the country. The federal government must also halt any current or future rail corridor abandonments.

**(b) Marine transportation in Northern Ontario**

Ontario's far North is far too reliant on airplanes to transport people & goods to & from the communities that are only accessible by air located on James Bay & Hudson Bay. Given the considerable cost of constructing & maintaining a road infrastructure in an underdeveloped region of Northern Ontario, the federal government should investigate the opportunity to develop an affordable, warm weather ferry service between the coastal

communities of Fort Severn, Peawanuck, Attawapiskat, Kashechewan, Fort Albany to connect to Moosonee & the Polar Bear Express train that links to the rest of Ontario. This is analogous to existing ferry services for remote communities located on the Atlantic & Pacific coasts of Canada.

The development of a low level seaport at Moosonee, in conjunction with the use of the existing railway, could alleviate congestion of existing road, rail & marine transportation of goods through the lower Great Lakes region, as well as potentially future transportation of materials from the Ring of Fire.

**Contact information**

**The following contact information is requested.**

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**Transport Canada will consider all comments.**

**Thank you for participating.**