

A government's legacy in transportation inequity

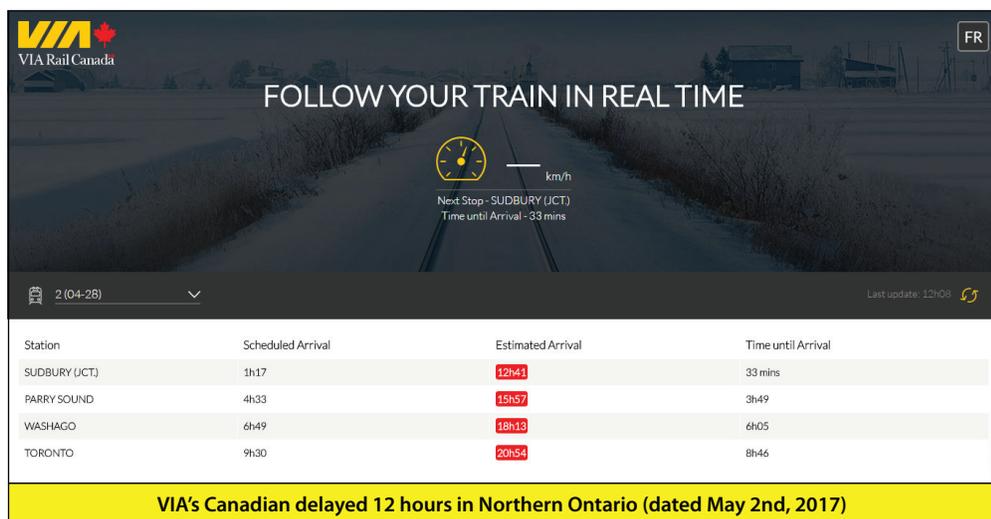
Commitment to High Speed Rail in the South ... Cutting Services in the North

Kathleen Wynne and the Liberal government at Queen's Park announced last week a 21 billion dollar plan to develop a high speed rail corridor between Toronto & Windsor. A project that is estimated to cost \$1,562 for every resident in the province, the proposed high speed rail plan has excluded mid sized to small communities from its vision in Southwestern Ontario.

Meanwhile in Northern Ontario, the government refuses to address legitimate transportation challenges that exist in the region. Both the federal & provincial governments continue to rob from Peter in order to pay Paul, resulting in a level of inequity between the needs of urban and rural communities. **Where's Northern Ontario's share of the pie?**

Public transportation becoming unreliable or extinct

Northerners have been subjected to a number of recent reductions in the frequency or reliability of their train, bus and air services. People living in remote communities are unable to rely on VIA Rail's Canadian, a service that is routinely four, eight, 12, 16 or even 20 hours late. Riders of VIA's Sudbury-White River train subjected to regular delays ranging from one to two & half hours.



VIA's Canadian delayed 12 hours in Northern Ontario (dated May 2nd, 2017)

Station	Scheduled Arrival	Estimated Arrival	Time until Arrival
SUDBURY (JCT)	1h17	12h41	33 mins
PARRY SOUND	4h33	15h57	3h49
WASHAGO	6h49	18h13	6h05
TORONTO	9h30	20h54	8h46

As reported in January, travellers on Greyhound Canada's motor coach service were left to fend for themselves in Wawa for nearly 24 hours, on a bus without heat, subsequent to the closure of Highway 17. Another traveller was reportedly left stranded for nine hours in Blind River because of another weather related closure of the Trans-Canada highway. A few weeks ago, the Town Council of Kapuskasing was forced to cancel its subsidy to Bearskin Airlines for budgetary reasons.

Greyhound – Any Responsibility for Stranded Passengers?

<http://www.myalgoma.ca/2017/01/25/greyhound-any-responsibility-for-stranded-passengers/>

Longtime Greyhound bus rider demands better service for Northern Ontario

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/sudbury/greyhound-service-northern-ontario-1.3943078>

The operation of the Hearst run uneconomical at this time

<http://www.facebook.com/KasperMiniBus/posts/763002983842397>

Making a case for improved transportation

During the most recent Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities' conference (FONOM), Tija Dirks, the director of the transportation planning branch with the Ministry of Transportation of Ontario (MTO), said :

"For people who live along the corridor that previously had passenger rail service, this is a very big issue. The solution is not easy. You have to build a business case for it."

Service reductions since 2012 in Northern Ontario

Ontario Northland

2012 Provincial Government eliminated funding for Northlander train (Toronto to Cochrane)

VIA Rail Canada

2012 Federal Government reduced Canadian train service from three to two operating days during winter season (Northern Ontario)

Bearskin Airlines

2014 Eliminated only flight service from North Bay to Ottawa

Greyhound Canada

2015 Eliminated five motor coach routes between Sudbury & Toronto (2), Ottawa (2), and Winnipeg (1)

Ontario Northland

2015 Provincial Government eliminated three motor coach routes between Cochrane & Timmins (1), Cochrane & Matheson (1), and Kapuskasing & Hearst (reduced to 3 days a week)

Transport Canada

2015/2016 Eliminated (twice) Algoma Central train funding (Sault-Ste-Marie to Hearst)

Caribou Coach / Kasper Bus Lines

2015/2016 Eliminated (twice) only motor coach route between Hearst & Longlac

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The Economic and Social Impact of Ontario Northland report (2009) prepared by HDR Corporation, in association with Dr. Bakhtiar Moazzami (pages 87 to 89) indicates :

- Passenger transportation services (rail and motor coach) provide reasonably priced and convenient transportation options to residents of Northeastern Ontario for transportation between local communities to visit families, friends, or for medical appointments.*

As many as 1 in 4 residents of Northeastern Ontario may be using the motor coach services annually, and many more use passenger rail services. The services are particularly important to college students, people who do not have access to a car, or want to avoid driving in certain weather conditions such as in winter.
- Passenger transportation services bring in many tourists to the region and help increase the tourism exposure of the region.*
- Each \$1 of Ontario Northland operational output results in a total \$2.11 of business output, \$0.86 of employment income, and each \$1 million of Ontario Northland operational output results in a total of 14.62 jobs across the province.*
- Transportation connectivity improves the regional economic wellbeing; the communities that are linked to Ontario Northland rail services tend to have higher average earnings than most other communities in Northeastern Ontario.*

Full report : http://neorn.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/ON-Economic-Impact_Final-Report-October-13-2009.pdf

Queen's Park & Parliament have announced tens of billions of dollars to improve and expand GO train service to Bowmanville & Niagara Falls. The province subsidizes many millions annually to the operation of the Union-Pearson (UP) Express. The Northlander amounted to an investment of 86 cents per resident of Ontario. The federal contribution to the Northlander & Algoma Central services was a mere 7 cents for every Canadian.

It's time for both levels of government to fund and restore much needed train services in rural & Northern Ontario, as well as ensuring the longterm sustainability of short line (regional) railways, particularly the Huron Central Railway.

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"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead