
WOODSTOCK VIA RAIL SERVICE IMPROVEMENTS

Delegation to Oxford County

April 24th 2024

Ken Westcar, Transport Action Ontario



What's happening in Southwestern Ontario (1)

- **Southwestern Ontario Transportation Plan (MTO)**
 - Report from mayors and other stakeholders submitted to MTO in August 2022.
 - Embargoed by MTO.
 - Can now be reviewed here: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/southwestern-ontario-transportation-task-force-final-report>
 - Is foundation for subsequent Arcadis/IBI report: now passed Technical Advisory Committee stage (stakeholder input) and currently subject to public MTO on-line survey and EBR input with May 27th 2024 closing: [Planning transportation for Southwestern Ontario | ontario.ca](#)
 - Final SWO Transportation Network Plan release will be after a provincial policy alignment review; no guarantee that plan recommendations and priorities will be implemented by the province.

What's happening in Southwestern Ontario (2)

- CPCS rail infrastructure capacity and utilization study (Transport Canada).
 - Study scope excludes the North Main Line (assumed MTO territory by T.C.).
 - Primary focus on CN and CPKC assets in SWO and capacity constraints.
 - Very selective stakeholder consultations.
 - Submitted to Transport Canada for review.
 - Unsure if VIA Rail are part of the review process.
 - Transport Action Ontario has requested preview from Transport Canada and a public release date. No commitment so far.
 - CN conducting own capacity study – suggested CPKC should host some passenger traffic at federal hearings.

Oxford County impacts and actions

- Current VIA train schedules are not attractive to many potential users due to service gaps.
- Afternoon services to Toronto have demand suppressive approx. 9hr gap (11.23am – 20.10pm).
- Inhibits use of VIA services for business travelers – negative to regional economic activity and sustainability.
- Service levels not reflective of Oxford County and SWO population growth and demographics.
- Induces highway usage for personal and business travel.
- **Short-term** fix is to have **VIA Train #76** (London to Toronto) stop in Woodstock (approx. 16.30 departure). Minimal cost impact for VIA Rail.
- **Longer-term** solution is **Train #76** plus a **reintroduced Train #74** with approx. 12.30pm departure from London (approx. 13.10pm from Woodstock). Additional VIA investment required – may fit VIA schedule improvement plans.

Near optimized Woodstock eastbound departure schedule.

Train #	Departure	Notes
82	0655	Existing
70	0817	Existing
72	1123	Existing
74	1310	Reintroduced train
76	1620	Existing train – new stop*
78	2010	Existing*

*International, Chicago-Toronto service not identified in this schedule. Could be Train 76 (most likely) or 78.

2hr service interval would be ideal but dependent on longer-term modal shift from highways and appropriate provincial mobility policies.

Recommended actions.

1. Link actions to Oxford County Transportation Master Plan (rail mode expansion).
2. Train #76 stop in Woodstock: Letter to Mario Peloquin, VIA President and CEO with a qualified request (MP Arpan Khanna may assist). This train may be part of the Chicago to Toronto service.
3. Full participation in MTO on-line survey and EBR input (closes May 27th).
4. Engage with MTO on possibility of provincially-supported VIA schedule improvements in SWO.
5. Reintroduced Train #74 needs consultations with and support of mayors on Dundas subdivision plus Windsor, Sarnia and **Stratford***. All 3 cities are possible departure/arrival points.
6. Full support for **SWO passenger rail summit** ahead of provincial and federal study releases to proactively influence outcome. Needs organizing and funding. (TAO and TAC could partner).
7. Ensure municipal requests are substantiated with details on local transit integration.
8. Make Woodstock train station into an attractive Oxford County “portal” in cooperation with VIA.
9. Be cautious on future VIA HFR commitment for SWO. Entire project remains highly aspirational.

4. Highlights of Financial Results and Major Key Operating Statistics (cont'd)

<i>(in millions of Canadian dollars)</i>	Quarters ended December 31				Years ended December 31			
	2022	2021	Var \$	Var %	2022	2021	Var \$	Var %
Financial Position and Cash Flows								
Total assets <i>(section 5.4)</i>	2,591.3	2,177.5	413.8	19.0%	2,591.3	2,177.5	413.8	19.0%
Total liabilities and deferred capital funding <i>(section 5.4)</i>	2,356.1	2,023.5	332.6	16.4%	2,356.1	2,023.5	332.6	16.4%
Cash <i>(section 5.5)</i>	9.8	4.4	5.4	122.7%	9.8	4.4	5.4	122.7%
Net cash (used in) provided by operating activities <i>(section 5.5)</i>	(24.1)	(31.1)	7.0	22.5%	8.3	15.3	(7.0)	(45.8%)
Net cash provided by (used in) investing activities <i>(section 5.5)</i>	14.0	8.4	5.6	66.7%	1.4	(20.5)	21.9	106.8%
Net cash (used in) financing activities <i>(section 5.5)</i>	(1.0)	(0.6)	(0.4)	(66.7%)	(4.3)	(2.6)	(1.7)	(65.4%)
Government Funding								
Operating <i>(section 6)</i>	87.1	88.0	(0.9)	(1.0%)	354.3	370.5	(16.2)	(4.4%)
Capital <i>(section 6)</i>	114.0	72.1	41.9	58.1%	318.2	226.4	91.8	40.5%
Total Government funding	201.1	160.1	41.0	25.6%	672.5	596.9	75.6	12.7%
Key Operating Statistics								
Train miles operated <i>(in thousands)</i>	1,560	1,281	279	21.8%	5,382	3,647	1,735	47.6%
Seat miles <i>(in millions)</i>	351	288	63	21.9%	1,226	668	558	83.5%
Passenger miles <i>(in millions)</i>	224	144	80	55.6%	749	327	422	129.0%
Passengers <i>(in thousands)</i>	1,031.2	677.0	354.2	52.3%	3,301.7	1,512.0	1,789.7	118.4%
Average passenger load factor (%)	64	51	13	25.5%	61	49	12	24.5%
RASM (revenue per available seat mile) <i>(in cents) - Note 1</i>	29.44	20.17	9.27	46.0%	27.33	19.99	7.34	36.7%
CASM (cost per available seat mile) <i>(in cents) - Note 1</i>	54.26	50.73	3.53	7.0%	56.23	75.45	(19.22)	(25.5%)
Cost recovery ratio (%) - Note 1	54.3	39.8	14.5	36.4%	48.6	26.5	22.1	83.4%
Operating deficit per passenger mile <i>(in cents) - Note 1</i>	38.9	61.1	(22.2)	(36.3%)	47.3	113.3	(66.0)	(58.3%)
On-time performance (%)	59	68	(9)	(13.2%)	57	72	(15)	(20.8%)

(Amounts in bracket represent decreases)