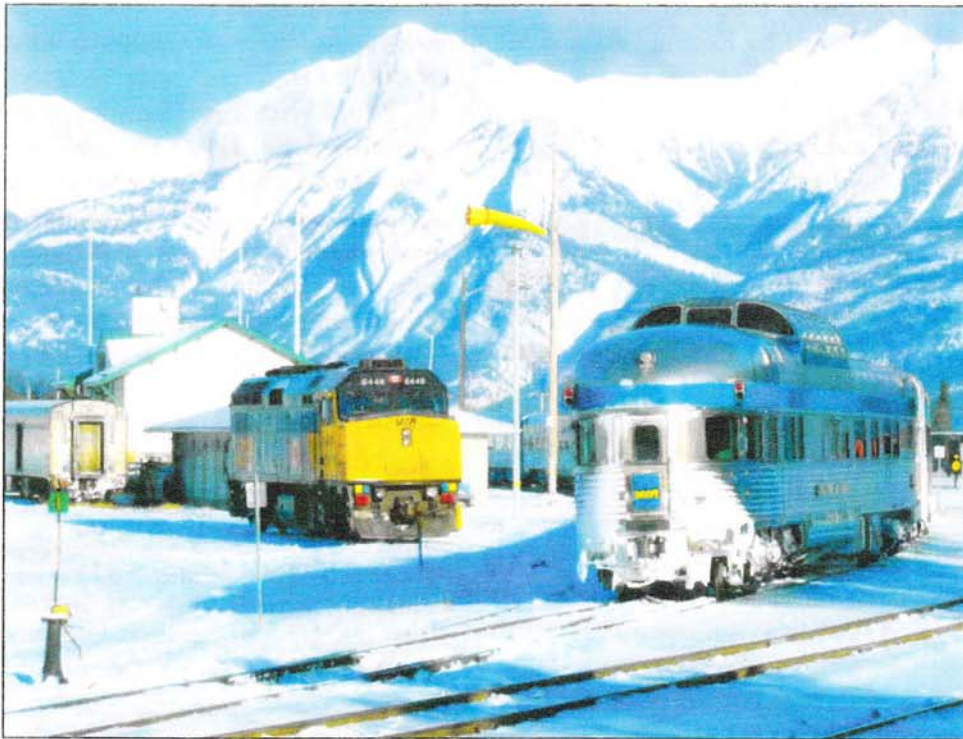


# Western Newsletter

## Transport 2000 Canada

*Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba & Saskatchewan*



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The eastbound Canadian, VIA #2 pulls into Jasper Station, crusted with snow, on a cold day in January 2007. VIA maintained a spare locomotive in Jasper in case of emergencies on either the Skeena or The Canadian.

Photo credit:  
Matthew Hicks

## FROM THE PRAIRIE PAST PRESIDENT

Greetings! Forget the recent troubles! Transport 2000 Prairie is very much alive and bubbling to get stronger. We have a full interim executive except for Saskatchewan Vice-President. We thank Martin Wooldridge for his leadership as president. And we are enormously grateful to Martin and George Wooldridge, and Jonathan Bodvarson for their persistent, dedicated hard slogging to bring into being the Davidson Line Board. This is a crucial step in bringing back the trains between Regina and Saskatoon, and an inspiration to other areas

for reviving their own train lines.

In February, Regina area Transport 2000 gathered 15 members for a supper meeting where we envisioned what we value in Transport 2000, and then what we can do here. Sharing good food together is a great way to make new and older members feel welcomed and a valued part of the team. Committees will work on some of the plans, such as networking with other Regina groups, and also gathering signatures and writing to the Board of Education about their plan to close 12 schools and bus

the children. We champion walkable, non-car-dependent, healthy communities. Another supper meeting will follow in March.

Think of Transport 2000 Prairie as a network of cells.

A cell can be wherever one member talks to another member about transport-related issues, and what they can do - even one thing. Even 2 or 3 people can **Do Something**.

Cells **Grow**. Maybe call all the members in your area - invite

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## PAST PRESIDENT

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them for tea at a restaurant, for one hour only. (I first became a member when a lonely member in Brantford, Ontario invited me and others to his apartment to learn about Transport 2000). Ask me for the names and contact information.

**Gain One New Member** - only \$20, or give a membership to an interested friend.

**Write a Letter** to your local newspaper, or call a talk-line, to tell about this organization as a way to get involved with others in making change.

**Please tell us** what you are doing. Get names and contact information about your area members from me.

**Consider helping us:** We can use a real president or co-president, membership secretary, Vice-Pres. for Saskatchewan, and later for Alberta, or even a contact person in each province to assist with phoning, etc.

Repeatedly we are told we are living with a ticking time-bomb of climate upheaval. Our work within Transport 2000 is part of the solution. **We must carry on and expand the network.**

**Membership.** We need at least 20 new members or long-lapsed renewals in order to earn a second voting representative at the national AGM in Ottawa May 2,3. If you send memberships in Transport 2000 to me, we will know speedily how many we have and then we will send them on.

*Catherine Verrall  
Past President - Transport 2000 Prairie  
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## CAMPAIGNING AND ADVOCACY IN ACTION

*The Craik Subdivision (Regina to Saskatoon) Retention Initiative*

In the summer of 2006 several members of the Transport 2000 Prairie Executive identified the fact that the southern portion of the Craik Subdivision from Davidson (approximately at the midpoint) to Regina had not seen any rail service since 2002. Obviously its future as a rail infrastructure was in jeopardy. This was neither telepathic nor the result of insider information, but coincidentally CN placed the 86 miles from Davidson to Regina on their abandonment list published in October 2006. This action increased the focus of Transport 2000 Prairie on saving the line from destruction. It was classified as a grain dependent branch line even though in reality it's the direct link between the two major cities of Regina and Saskatoon. Consequently, the subdivision is subject to a defined regulatory three-year abandonment process.

Initially efforts were directed to raising awareness and generating support both at the local community level and more generally with the provincial political community. Accordingly, meetings were held with local councils and rural municipalities in Craik and Davidson and a presentation was made to all impacted rural municipalities at the Saskatchewan Association of Rural Municipalities (SARM) Convention in Saskatoon, in November 2006.

Building a belief that the line was not doomed to destruction took time and painstaking effort at the community level. The

cumulative effects of rural decline, particularly the feeling of powerlessness to influence the corporate strategies of the grain companies and the major railways had tended to create a climate of skepticism that abandonment was inevitable.

The Short line Symposium sponsored by Transport 2000 Prairie at the University of Saskatchewan, Saskatoon in May 2007, seemed to mark a turning point. The quality of the speakers and attendant publicity acted as a catalyst in building a positive mood that there were other options that were available than simply accepting the loss of a valuable strategic infrastructure.

The Symposium created awareness of the successful existence of other short lines, aided by the Rail Services Unit of the provincial Department of Highways/Transportation. As of now these nine active operations recently formed a provincial association to act as a common resource for existing and future operations.

Judicious use of media releases and partnering with other groups to develop coalitions of interest occurred. Meetings were held with provincial government and opposition members. The administrations of the cities of Regina and Saskatoon were contacted and presentations made with favourable outcomes. As a result of a meeting with the President/CEO of Tourism Saskatchewan, Dr. Lynda Haverstock, another centre of support was created.

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## CAMPAIGNING AND ADVOCACY IN ACTION (CONTINUED)

On June 22, 2007 a Craik Subdivision Stakeholders Committee was formed. Membership consisted of organizations making a financial contribution to the 20% portion of the cost of a feasibility study. The government of Saskatchewan encourages short line development by providing 80% of the cost of feasibility studies up to a maximum of \$25,000. By making a modest financial contribution Transport 2000 Prairie became a stakeholder along with seven rural and urban municipalities and one business interested in expanding the ability of rail to service its requirements.

The final draft of the Feasibility Study was completed and presented on August 30th and concluded that operation of a short line was financially viable with the preferred option being the entire Craik subdivision from Regina to Saskatoon. The benefit of this option would be to capitalize on the remaining traffic flows to and from three businesses located in Davidson as a basis for building traffic growth. Unfortunately significant de-marketing of the line has occurred over the past decade, for example, all inter-modal traffic for the southern section of the province is now hauled by truck from Saskatoon. Informal discussions with CN representatives in November indicated an unwillingness to negotiate the sale of the entire line as a single package. As a result, the Stakeholders group made the decision to focus on building a case for acquiring the southern portion as an initial step.

The Feasibility Study identified a range of future

possibilities for traffic development, including passenger traffic. The initial focus would be the generation of additional freight traffic, including sustained efforts to create producer car traffic.

As a result of contacts with local Chambers of Commerce, Tourism Committees and Tourism Saskatchewan, opportunities were identified for tourism style traffic including dinner-trains to the Qu'Appelle Valley from Regina. Ultimately commuter and inter-city traffic operations would be the objective, however, because of the need for improving the track to allow for higher speeds and safety requirements, the financial capability of the operation would have to be built first by increased freight revenue.

The possibility of partnering with the Saskatchewan Transportation Corporation (STC) to create a comprehensive transportation entity was identified. The introduction of passenger service between the two cities and the corridor in between would reintroduce the Dayliner service which operated until 1981, which was then replaced until 1984 by an under resourced inter-city service between Winnipeg and Edmonton via Regina and Saskatoon timetabled as trains 109/110. Interestingly the last scheduled service on the Craik Sub. was a charter passenger service operated by VIA for a US based tour operator, which traversed the line on 22nd April 2001.

Decisions were made at a Stakeholders Committee Meeting in Kenaston (a community between Davidson and Saskatoon)

on January 4th 2008, to pursue incorporation of a private company by a selected share offering and to fund a consultant to produce a detailed business plan. The plan is seen as a vehicle for raising funds for the purchase of the line. A total of 10 municipal governments and local businesses subscribed to the share offering and incorporation of a numbered company was confirmed by the provincial Securities Commission on 28th January. The Business Plan is due to be released by the first week of March.

The lengthy process continues towards the long-term objective of securing the future of a strategic piece of rail infrastructure. With the amount of local support now generated the possibility of success is greatly increased but two major hurdles remain to be overcome; raising sufficient funds for the actual purchase and concluding satisfactory agreements with CN. It is anticipated that the role of the Canadian Transportation Agency (CTA) will become crucial in establishing the Net Salvage Value (NSV). This would be the basis for the acquisition cost, but with constantly escalating world market steel prices would only have short term validity.

Whatever the ultimate outcome the satisfaction is tangible of having attempted to practice the rhetoric of working to retain a piece of sustainable rail infrastructure for environmental, economic and social reasons.

*Martin Wooldridge  
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## FROM TRANSPORT 2000 BC

On February 27th, 2008, we had a general meeting to select a new board and executive. I was asked to become president, but I felt we needed a younger person. I will be acting president until such time as a younger person will step forward to take on the task.

Besides undoing the moves to create a Western branch of Transport 2000, we also support a name change that is not tied to a year. Transport 2000 can be defended to some extent, because we as yet have not got a good public transportation system that would be worthy of the year 2000. But others interpret the name of dwelling in the past, rather than looking toward the future.

If we do look towards the future, than we can see increasing oil prices and a great need for an alternative public transport network, and that includes all modes. Such a network should provide connections, not just a set of routes.

Locally we would like to see the Evergreen Line become the first priority. We also think that

the Evergreen Line should form one line all the way to the University of British Columbia (UBC). The linear motor technology works well, but mandates that the entire line must be grade separated. This is very costly. We are finalizing a submission to urge the authorities to re-examine the conversion of the Millennium Line, west of Lougheed or Baird to rotary motor operation. We feel that are portions of this line that could operate at grade and have at grade crossings, as is the case in Edmonton and Calgary. It would mean high level platform trains, again like in Edmonton and Calgary. However these trains would use the side electric pick-up of the existing Millennium Line, but operate with a pantograph on sections which are not grade separated. More electric rail transit would be the result for the same number of dollars.

We are also trying to approach students studying in planning and transportation to join Transport 2000 Canada.

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## NOTE FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

You may have noticed something about this particular edition of the Western Newsletter. Namely, the envelope has an Ottawa address on it, and technically, it's not winter of 2008 anymore. My apologies, life has managed to delay this edition of the newsletter.

I will be representing the Prairie region at the upcoming AGM in Ottawa for Transport 2000 Canada, and would certainly like to hear from you if there are any concerns you wish to be made while I have their ears. Or, if you have any news from your part of the country, I'd love to hear it!

Also, drop me an email if you're interested in having a PDF (Acrobat 5.0) of the Western Newsletter emailed to you.

*Jon Calon*  
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