

# Western Newsletter

## Transport 2000 Canada

*Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba & Saskatchewan*



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Pictured are Transport 2000 Prairie members meeting with Saskatchewan Transportation Company (STC) officials in Regina.

## TRANSPORT 2000 EXECUTIVE MEETS WITH STC

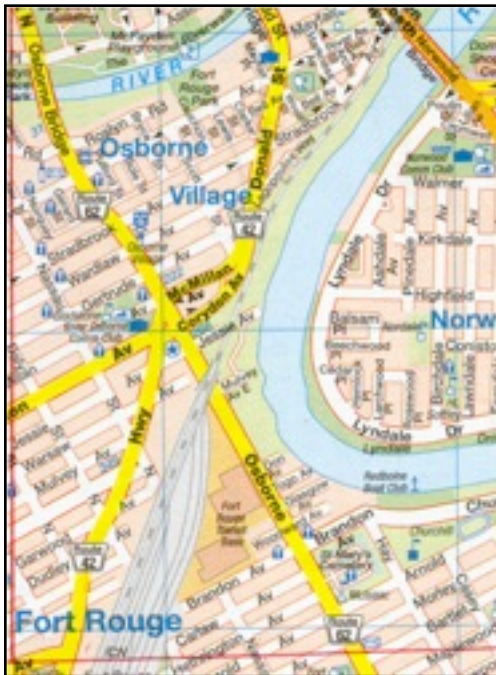
Transport 2000 Prairie members Bob Ivanochko (Treasurer), Catherine Verrall (President) and Ron Haskell (Vice-President for Saskatchewan) met on the afternoon of 22 June with STC President and CEO Ray Clayton and Manager for Tariffs and Scheduling, Allan Douglas. The meeting was held at STC's brand new headquarters and proved to be very informative for all. Clayton thanked Transport 2000 for the support that they have shown in the past and briefed members of Transport 2000 Prairie about current issues and future developments. Incremental improvements to various bus depots, such as Saskatoon, are

awaiting funding. STC has extended service from Prince Albert to La Loch by contracting a private operator from the area to provide the service on behalf of the Company, and arranged for businesses in the local communities to serve as STC agents. Clayton outlined the security measures that had been implemented; increased training, GPS systems on all buses, protective shields placed behind drivers and the inspection of carry on baggage. While STC has been satisfied with the response to the incident on the Greyhound bus that precipitated this, Clayton commented that this act carried out by a deranged individual could

have happened on the street or anywhere, but because it happened on a bus the public has associated this act with the bus industry resulting in significant loss of ridership throughout western Canada. Up until that incident STC was showing a 4% increase in ridership.

We suggested some improvements. Haskell explained that on 2 December, 2008 VIA Rail has changed their schedule making it possible to take an STC bus from Regina to connect with the eastbound Canadian in Melville. Connections for the return journey are also possible, however as of yet neither VIA Rail

## WINNIPEG BUS RAPID TRANSIT



### Phase I BRT Route

Referring to the drawing at left: the route starts at the Main Street bridge (top right) and proceeds south, ultimately diving under the CN Fort Rouge yards and going through presently undeveloped land to the Jubilee overpass. In detail: the southbound route comes off Main Street and proceeds along Stradbrook, turning south along Donald. At the intersection of Corydon Ave. and Osborne St., unflatteringly known as Confusion Corner, the route leaves the street and runs close to the CN mainline,

jumping over Osborne and squeezing past a hydro substation; it then descends and goes under the railway at approximately Garwood Ave. The northbound route is the same until Harkness St. (hard to see on the map), at which point it becomes an ordinary street rather than a BRT route. It would seem that the BRT lanes will be reversed – southbound to the left – to minimize the number of crossings with regular traffic; As it is the intersection at Harkness will necessitate a priority BRT intersection. Donald and Stradbrook are fairly important arteries and this will be a difficult transition.

This photo at right shows the work on Stradbrook Ave. This road is narrow enough to begin with – at one point there is no more than eight feet between it and the CN right-of-way – and to squeeze two more lanes into the available space will require considerable ingenuity! This is the site of the crossover to Harkness St. The eventual configuration will have two lanes of traffic each way as well as the BRT.



Photo at left shows work on Donald St., looking south. At present the road is being widened at the right/west side. The eventual route will be along the left/east side of the road, parallel to the CN mainline, which is just out of the photo, to the left.

*Peter Lacey  
(Blair Korchinski photos).*

MEETING (CONTINUED  
FROM PAGE 1)

nor STC has noted this in their respective schedules. Clayton promised that he would look into this. Haskell also raised the possibility of offering a drop-off/pick-up service for passengers wishing to connect either direction; Douglas is going to investigate the feasibility of this. Verrall noted that there was no route map displayed in the new bus depot in Regina and suggested that passengers would benefit from one.

*Ron Haskell, Regina, VP TA Sask.*

WINNIPEG BUS  
PASSES

Winnipeg Free Press, September 15: A plan to create a specially-priced bus pass for low-income people is likely to be rejected by Council, as it duplicates a provincial program. However, with the new electronic fare terminals that are to be introduced on the buses, lower fares for off-peak hours will be considered.

MANITOBA

As of this issue, there are less than a dozen Transport 2000 members in Manitoba. One of our priorities must be to correct this situation! There are lost of activists – we must try to join up with them.

THE NEW EDITOR  
SPEAKS ...

This is the Fall edition of the Western newsletter. It's coming to you late as I have taken over the editing of it from Jon Calon, and the transition has taken some time. Now, since Jon is in Alberta and I'm in Manitoba, the emphasis will be seen to change; naturally I am much more aware of what's going on here than I am in the rest of the West. Therefore I will be depending very greatly on Western members to send me relevant material! In the meantime there are a number of things going on in Manitoba which T2000 members may not be aware of.

One disappointing bit of news this morning (Sept. 8) in the Winnipeg Free Press concerns the fate of the abandoned CN Oak Point Sub., which runs north through town more or less parallel to Route 90. Its fate has been up in the air for a while, since initially it was supposed to be reserved for "people-moving" purposes - perhaps eventually a rapid-transit line but certainly for bicycle and pedestrian use - but right from the beginning there was developer pressure to build on it - and as of today it is reported that a proposal to build 62 bungalow condominiums is to be debated by Council. This proposal probably will be accepted, or the next one will. It's disappointing that the City can see no other uses for small empty areas in otherwise built-up portions than more building.

Enough editorializing. Please send in your stories!

*Peter Lacey, Editor.*

EVERGREEN LINE

In BC news, the Evergreen Line is still alive, despite financial problems at Translink. The proposed \$1.4 billion project to link the Coquitlam Centre area to the SkyTrain network at Lougheed Town Centre station is being managed by the Province of BC.

The proposed technology for the line to Coquitlam has changed every few years depending on the government in power at the time. Now that the Province has taken over the project it is back to SkyTrain technology. In addition to the existing station at Lougheed Town Centre near the Burnaby-Coquitlam border, there are proposed stations in Burquitlam, Port Moody, Ioco, Coquitlam Central, and Douglas College in the Coquitlam town centre core. There are possibilities for two additional stations, likely an additional stop in western Port Moody and near the Coquitlam Centre mall at Lincoln Street.

Transport 2000 BC supported the Translink planned Evergreen line as an LRT line which had more of a community feel with more stations, and some say that the switch back to SkyTrain technology is too expensive. One main advantage of SkyTrain is the possibility of a one seat ride from Coquitlam Centre to the Commercial-Broadway hub station.

*continued on next page*

## UPGRADES TO THE HUDSON BAY RAILWAY

It may not be too well-known outside the borders of Manitoba that VIA service to Churchill has been very adversely affected by the poor condition of the tracks north of The Pas, and in particular north of Gillam. The track is so bad that a 10mph speed limit has been imposed, which has lengthened the trip so much that VIA has dropped one Winnipeg-Churchill round trip, instead running a The Pas-Churchill roundtrip (leaving at some awful early-morning hour at both ends!) \$63 million was made available to the HBR last year by the Federal and Manitoba governments for track upgrades. Work was done during 2008; more work was to be done this summer. Reproduced here is the report issued by HBR ; no followup has yet been issued.

### OVERVIEW OF PROJECT

The HBR project for the 2009 work season is scheduled to start on May 15, 2009 and is anticipated to be complete on November 6, 2009. The project Work plan is divided into work elements, each describing the work that will be performed this work season. Surfacing and ballasting: the project work will start with four surfacing crews working north out of The Pas. They will perform spot surfacing aimed at removing slow orders as they advance north. The surfacing crews will be in position to begin working north of Gillam on June 1st. The crews will work north of Gillam on the Herchmer Subdivision until October 30th. Beginning November 1st and continuing until freeze-up the

crews will work south back to The Pas.

### TIE INSTALLATION AND RELATED SURFACING.

The program this year will install 54,700 ties on the Bay line. The location of installation is as follows: 10,000 ties on the Thicket Subdivision between Milepost 249 and 262 (near stations Boyd and Pit siding) and 44,700 ties on the Herchmer subdivision between Mileposts 365 and 418 (near stations Limestone and O'Day). The tie installation program will begin with the distribution of material on May 16th. The Installation crew will begin on June 8th at Milepost 249 on the Thicket Subdivision. The crew will work north installing the ties and re-surfacing the track. The crew will start the Herchmer Subdivision ties on or about June 20th and will continue installing ties until August 17th, at which time all tie installation work is anticipated to be complete.

### SIDING EXTENSIONS AND RESTORATIONS:

The siding projects for this year will occur at Churchill, Herchmer, and Gillam. The work involves the installation of rail and turnouts (switches). The work by location is as follows:

- Churchill: Turnouts: 8-June to 29-June, 6 Turnouts
- Herchmer: Rail: 30-Jun to 10-July, 2,000'
- Gillam: Turnouts: 10-July to 3-Aug, 6 Turnouts: Rail: 9-Aug to 18-Aug 19,900'

### PROJECT OUTCOMES:

The anticipated result of this year's program is a strengthened track structure that is capable of operations at higher track speed (removing 10 mph restriction and raising it to 25 mph). A particularly important outcome that is targeted is an improvement in travel time across the Herchmer Subdivision to less than 12 hours total travel time.

### LAST MOUNTAIN RAILWAY

As reported in the Spring/Summer edition, the Last Mountain Railway – the former CN line from Craik to Regina – is now in operation. Two diesels are in LMR colours and to date about fifty cars have been spotted. The main yard will be at Craik, with marshalling facilities and a seed cleaning plant.

### EVERGREEN LINE

#### (CONTINUED)

There are open houses to discuss the current plan for the Evergreen line in the next few weeks. If you want to have your say go to a session or online at:

<http://www.evergreenline.gov.bc.ca>  
The comment period is until November 13th .

T2000 BC

#### AT TRAIN SHOW

Transport 2000 BC plans to be at the Trains 2009 show at the Cameron Recreation Centre on Saturday and Sunday November 14 and 15th Stop by if you are in the area.

<http://www.bctrains.org/>

## CANADA LINE OPENS EARLY

The 19 km Canada Line linking downtown Vancouver to Richmond and the Vancouver International Airport opened for revenue service on August 18, following an afternoon of free service to the public on Monday, August 17. Fares will initially be fully integrated with the regular service, with the maximum being a two-zone trip (CDN \$3.75). A premium fare for trips to and from the Airport will be introduced in 2010. Trains will run from Waterfront to Bridgeport then alternately serve the Richmond and Airport branches, though the first few trains of the day will run Waterfront - YVR-Airport, starting at 4:50 a.m. Travel time to the airport will be 26 minutes, and 25 minutes to Richmond-Brighouse. Initial peak and midday service will be 3m45s on the main line. Evening service will be six-10 minutes on the mainline, 12-20 minutes on the branches. Real-time information displays on the platforms show the destinations and arrival times of the next three trains. While TransLink is branding the line as SkyTrain, it is a conventional automated metro with 20 m long, 3 m wide cars, rigid bogies and rotary motors and thus not compatible with the existing Expo and Millennium Lines. Two-car trains will form the initial service, though the long-term capacity of 15,000 pphpd would require new 3-car sets to be purchased and most platforms extended (anticipated by the station designs).

On Monday August 17 large crowds gathered with long lines at many stations with people eager to check out the Canada Line. At Yaletown-Roundhouse Station in the mid afternoon there was almost a two hour wait but everyone was patient and excited to be there. The first impression of the trains was that they were wider than the existing Expo and Millennium line cars and the ride was smoother. The stations were clean and well lit, but some of the platforms and entranceways seemed narrow. The wide front and back windows were a hit with everyone. Kids especially were excited to sit at the front and 'drive' the train. The opening day was well attended and attracted about 80,000 people during the limited period of free service from 1PM to 9PM.

Translink expects to hit the ridership target of 100,000 people per day by 2013 if not sooner. The first real test will be the day after Labour Day when the bus schedules get reorganized. On that date suburban buses from Richmond, South Delta, South Surrey and White Rock will terminate at Bridgeport Station and passengers will have to transfer there onto a train. Some people will grumble at the forced transfer, but other people will be pleased with increased frequency and reliability as buses no longer have to travel all the way into downtown Vancouver and can make more round trips.

*Matthew Buchanan.*



*Map and photo by Matthew Buchanan.*

*To see full version go to [bc.transport2000.ca](http://bc.transport2000.ca)*

*Photo above is on opening day at Templeton Station.*

**SECOND AMTRAK TRAIN**

Transport 2000 eagerly awaited for the approval of the expanded train service between Vancouver and Seattle. For fourteen years there has been a daily train to Seattle. It leaves Vancouver in the evening and returns from Seattle in the morning. The schedule caters to people coming from Seattle to Vancouver and not the other way around. The Washington state Department of Transportation which plans and funds the operation of the service has been planning to institute a second frequency to Vancouver for since at least 2003. (Long Range Plan for Amtrak Cascades)

After the CBSA finally agreed to cover the costs for border inspection, Amtrak announced that it would begin service as soon as possible. On August 19th the first northbound train as an extension of the existing service to Bellingham WA arrived in Vancouver..

On August 20th a group that had travelled on the inaugural train met at the Vancouver convention centre for a meeting to promote and market the second train. It was organized by the Pacific North West Economic Region and included people from Tourism BC, Victoria Clipper, The Cascadia Center, Translink, and others. Representing Transport 2000 was David Stubbs and myself. The main focus of the meeting was to ensure that the second train gets adequate promotion to enable the CBSA to continue the border fee exemption indefinitely.

On Saturday September 26th I made a trip to Seattle on the new train. I arrived at Pacific Central Station at 6:00 am after a short bus ride from downtown. The morning train leaves at 6:40. There was already a line up of people waiting for their seat assignments and to go through security.

The early departure time is not very convenient for most travellers. The station is right beside MainStreet SkyTrain station, but the SkyTrain doesn't run early enough on weekend mornings to use it. As it was, I had

to catch the first #19 Metrotown bus of the day to get there on time.

The train was reasonably busy even without much promotion from Amtrak. It left on time and did not encounter too many delays along the way. The wait at the border for inspection seemed to go by quickly, although with a full train I imagine it would take longer. The train started to fill up even more at stops in Bellingham, Mount Vernon and Everett and arrived pretty much on time in Seattle. I noticed that the return train to Vancouver Sunday night was sold out two days before when I checked the website again. It seems like the new service will do well and meet the goals set by the CBSA pilot project.

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