

2017 ANNUAL PUBLIC MEETING – QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

The below document contains all questions sent to VIA Rail leading up to and during the 2017 Annual Public Meeting webcast. Thank you to everyone who participated in the meeting and sent us their questions.

Please note that questions of the same nature have been grouped together. Grammar and syntax of the questions received have been corrected.

VIA Préférence

- 1. Is there any interest in reforming the VIA Préférence system? Relative to the airlines, the benefits are extremely basic, the point thresholds for redemption are high, and the system is very inflexible.**

VIA Rail is continually looking to improve and evolve the VIA Préférence program. The VIA Préférence program has a very competitive offer compared to other loyalty programs in terms of generosity (the “return on spend”) and has fewer restrictions (e.g., capacity control on redemption seats, blackout periods) than airline loyalty programs.

- 2. I am a senior and enjoy traveling VIA Rail to Nova Scotia. We use the points when we can, but the system of points accumulation takes too long to be viable, especially for seniors. Are you updating so seniors can accrue and use the points more easily?**

We are not planning to make changes to the program that are specific to seniors.

- 3. Why can't you offer Privilege members a little leeway when a ticket change is required?**

We would encourage travellers who require greater flexibility of travelling to book Economy Plus or Business Plus tickets, which are fully refundable and exchangeable.

- 4. Why do Premier members not have access to the Business lounge?**

Due to lounge capacity and the number of visitors, VIA Préférence Premier members enjoy access to VIA Rail's Business Lounges only when travelling in Business class or with an Economy Plus fare ticket.

- 5. You offer coupons for your Préférence members, one of which is for 50% off the regular fare for the *Canadian* sleeper class. However you now base the 50% on peak travel times and not regular fare at time of travel. The 50% off based on peak time is hidden in the small print which is hard for seniors to read. Your coupons are very misleading. Why don't you make your coupons clear so people would know that it is 50% off peak and not regular fare as stated when travelling in off peak times?**

This offer was sent out to our 2016 Privilège and Premier members. For the 2017 coupon, the 50% discount is now applied to the regular fare for travel on the requested date, not the regular peak fare.

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- A large yellow graphic element on the left side of the page, consisting of a stylized 'S' or 'Z' shape with white diagonal stripes.
- 6. Why don't you have a 'buy points' option like Amtrak has? When one is very close on points, and wanting to use them for a future trip, it's frustrating to not be able to get those last few needed points. Living in the southwestern U.S., I can't just hop on a short-distance train to earn those last points.**

While this function is not possible given our current reservation system, we have initiated the process to replace our reservation system. The new system will allow for these upgrades.

- 7. Why can't family members pool their points for one ticket and give it as a gift?**

As is the case with most travel loyalty programs, VIA Préférence members accumulate points only for their own individual travel. The program serves to reward VIA Rail passengers and, as such, a member cannot transfer their points to anyone else.

- 8. Will you ever bring back your 4 times per year Préférence discount deal that you had a few years ago?**

There are no plans to bring back this offer.

- 9. With Aeroplan leaving Air Canada and its partner airlines is there an opportunity here for VIA Rail?**

We are unable to comment on the recent Aeroplan and Air Canada announcements.

- 10. Why are VIA Préférence Premier members travelling in Economy class not given priority boarding in Ottawa on trains that originate there, like they are in Québec City, Montréal, and Toronto?**

Premier members travelling in Economy class are welcome to board the train with Business class passengers, through the Business class car. We are not able to offer priority boarding in Ottawa for Premier members travelling in Economy class as we do in Québec City and Montréal, because we have a short amount of time to board passengers, and cannot delay the boarding process.

- 11. I'd like to know why Premier Status members are never called for advanced boarding in Toronto?**

Our boarding process is delivered in three steps: pre-boarding for families with small children and those with limited mobility, then Priority boarding, followed by general boarding. Priority boarding includes both Premier and Business class passengers.

In the Québec City-Windsor corridor, Premier members travelling in Economy class are welcome to board the train with Business class passengers, through the Business class car. In Toronto, due to the renovations at Toronto Union Station, the speakers have been temporarily removed for announcements. Therefore, until the speakers are replaced, pre-boarding and boarding announcements are made vocally by our service attendants which limits their reach.

- 12. Have you considered merging your frequent traveller programme with an airline programme, to encourage more multi-modal trips?**

VIA Rail is continually looking to improve and evolve the VIA Préférence program. We encourage inter-modal travel through our inter-modal partnerships, including many airlines. More information can be found on our website: <http://www.viarail.ca/en/travel-info/transport-services/intermodality/overview>. However, at this time, these partnerships do not extend to their loyalty programs. Such enhancements will be considered in the future.

- 13. When the new Prestige class was made available why was the decision made to redeeming the class so restrictive to Préférence members?**

There is limited availability of our Prestige class. While it is not always available for redemption, Sleeper Plus class is available and offers the added comfort of food and beverage service, additional amenities, and your choice of a cozy berth, a cabin for one, two or four.

- 14. For me to travel on VIA Préférence points from Sarnia to Toronto means I have to spend 1100 points to go from Sarnia to London and another 1100 to go from London to Toronto. However if I drive to Chatham, I can travel for 1100 points. Why is Sarnia-Toronto not 1100 points?**

Currently, Sarnia - Toronto is 1,125 points one way. Sarnia - London is 550 points one way and London-Toronto is another 550 points one way (1100 total). Chatham-Toronto is 550 points one way. The number of points necessary to redeem depends on the length of time of the trip, not the distance. Shorter distance trips (under 3.5 hours) are 550 points, while long distance trips (over 3.5 hours) are 1125 points. Sarnia to Toronto is about 5 hours, whereas Chatham to Toronto is about 3.5 hours, which is why more points are needed to travel from Sarnia to Toronto.

- 15. When a ticket is purchased by phone, can VIA Préférence points be added to an account without needing to call back for a correction?**

When booking by phone, if the member provides their VIA Préférence number, points are earned for the trip and will be added automatically.

- 16. Concerning VIA Préférence membership, why do only some applicants receive membership cards and not all applicants even though they have been given membership numbers?**

In 2016 we changed our policy and now issue cards to all new members. Previously, cards were only issued only once a member had completed a minimum amount of travel, after enrolling.

- 17. I was wondering if VIA Rail would ever consider upgrading loyal preference members to business class when there are unsold seats for a particular leg of their journey.**

Current system limitations preclude us from offering this upgrade. We have initiated the process to replace our reservation system which will allow for these upgrades and then some.

High Frequency Rail

- 1. You have painted a compelling vision for rail travel in the corridor between Toronto, Ottawa and Montréal. Unlike past visions, it seems grounded in reality and totally attainable. How are you progressing, and when could we expect to see improvements in travel time and frequency of trains? What is the biggest hurdle, and is there anything we can do collectively to help you overcome those hurdles?**

I know that you have spoken before about a plan for dedicated tracks. Where are you at with this plan? Has any level of government indicated concrete support at this point? What's the timeline for this, and how optimistic are you that it will actually happen?



VIA Rail has spent the last three years developing a project that proposes to separate passenger rail from freight by building its own rail corridor between Québec City, Montréal, Ottawa and Toronto. Operating on our own High Frequency Rail corridor would allow us to provide faster, safer, more frequent, more accessible, and more reliable service to Canadians. We refer to this project as “High Frequency Rail” or HFR. Budget 2016 provided Transport Canada with \$ 3.3 million to support an in-depth assessment of our HFR proposal. In December VIA Rail submitted its High Frequency Rail business case to Transport Canada. You can learn more about our HFR proposal [here](#). We look forward to additional community consultations with citizens to share more information and to acquire specific feedback on the project.

- 2. The route along the north shore between Montreal and Quebec is urgent in the short term. When will this happen?**

When will the HFR be available in Trois-Rivières?

HFR services would begin within four years of the project's approval and funding.

- 3. The Mont-Royal tunnel in Montréal: why have you accepted to be driven out of this important passage for the development of your future High Frequency Rail service north of the Saint Lawrence River? What are the ways you can counter this decision by the Québec Government?**

Is there any chance that HFR can ever be implemented east of Ottawa? Since the Québec government is hell-bent on using all spare capacity in Montréal (Central Station tunnel) for local transit, how could additional service realistically be added in Montreal?

For some time now, a technical team from VIA Rail has been working to determine how our HFR project can be implemented so as to maximize the benefits of collective rail transportation on the Deux-Montagnes subdivision and the tunnel under Mont-Royal. This effort should be concluded shortly.

An optimal deployment of VIA Rail's HRF project on the Deux-Montagnes subdivision and Mont-Royal tunnel would allow it to share the right-of-way and parts of its infrastructure. This could considerably increase the number of new rail passengers on the subdivision and tunnel. But above all it could lead to a reduction in greenhouse gases produced by car drivers.

- 4. What will you do if the Québec Bridge (which all the CN trains and yours pass over towards Québec City) is be completely demolished and rebuilt? If that is the case, it seems to me that all these trains towards Québec will be diverted to the North Shore (via the Québec Gatineau Railway tracks)**

The Québec Bridge is owned and maintained by CN, the infrastructure owner, and we have not been informed of any condition or situation that would affect VIA Rail services on this bridge.

- 5. Is it not time to seek a stronger legal framework to collaborate with provinces to expand Canada's passenger rail network?**

VIA Rail maintains excellent working relationships with provincial transport departments and their regional transit authorities.

- 6. I'm really excited for the High Frequency Rail project. Considering the fact that the project will use a new rail line that runs through Peterborough, how will the trains access Toronto Union Station? Through the Don Valley on the old Don Branch?**

There are several options for access to Toronto Union Station being considered including those mentioned.

7. What - if any - savings and service improvements would be realized for customers if the track VIA Rail uses were publicly owned?

VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail proposal to build a network of dedicated tracks will allow its trains to run at speeds up to 160km/h on the Toronto-Quebec City route reducing trip times significantly. It would triple the frequency of its trains and increase their on-time performance to over 95%.

8. Will VIA Rail own its tracks from Halifax to Vancouver by 2025?

VIA Rail does not currently have plans to purchase or build cross-country rail infrastructure.

9. Will the train ever come to Peterborough?

VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail project proposes to provide service between Toronto and Ottawa through Peterborough.

High Speed Rail

1. Are there any short or long term plans to bring high speed train infrastructure and service to Canada? What is preventing VIA Rail from functioning like the TGV (France high speed train system)?

How do the plans for high speed train service between Québec and Toronto coordinate with the proposed plans for the same kind of service between Toronto and Windsor, announced recently by the Ontario government?

VIA Rail does not have plans to introduce a high-speed train service. That being said, our management-led proposal to build a network of dedicated tracks, with trains running at speeds up to 160km/h on the Toronto-Quebec City route, would improve the frequency and reliability of service while reducing trip times significantly.

We look forward to working with the Government of Ontario to ensure interoperability between VIA Rail's HFR, east of Toronto and Ontario's High Speed Rail, west of Toronto.

Scheduling

Southwestern Ontario

1. When can we expect the passenger service between Sarnia, London, and Toronto to enter the twenty first century?

Can you please provide an update on plans to improve VIA Rail service along the Stratford to Toronto route?

Will VIA Rail be planning a later train from Windsor (approximately 7-9pm) instead of the last train leaving at 5:45pm?

I was wondering if you will add an extra train from Toronto to Brantford mid-afternoon? Currently there's one around noon and then nothing until 4:30.

Why are there no trains from Toronto to southern Ontario later in the evening on Saturday and Sunday? This really limits flexibility for travel within Ontario.

Will VIA Rail be increasing the number and choice of times of trains for the London to Toronto route? When can we expect this increase to occur?

Is there any way that Train 71 could depart from Toronto at 7:30 or after?

What are you doing to improve and increase services throughout Southwestern Ontario in the short term now and for the future?

We're always looking to improve our service in Southwestern Ontario. We review our schedules twice a year in order to improve our service, however we are dependent on negotiations with the third-party track owners. Currently, we are in negotiations with CN, GO Transit, GEXR and other infrastructure owners in order to grow our service in Southwestern Ontario.

2. Why did VIA Rail decrease services (almost non-existent) to the Niagara region?

Due to GO Transit's service already offered in this region, VIA Rail considerably reduced its service between Toronto and Niagara Falls in 2012. The adjustments made to this route were done to eliminate duplicate services, and in order to reallocate VIA Rail's resources to markets where demand was high and growing. This decision was also influenced by decreasing ridership in previous years.

3. Why can't train 82 make a brief stop in Aldershot to pick up the commuters formerly on the Niagara Falls train?

Currently, we are in negotiations with CN, GO Transit, GEXR and other infrastructure owners in order to grow our service in Southwestern Ontario. Once we are in a position to offer more frequencies in Southwestern Ontario we can review the possibility of train 82 stopping in Aldershot.

4. Now that Hamilton has a new GO station platform on the CN Toronto - Niagara Falls mainline, will the Amtrak/VIA Maple Leaf be making a station stop here in the future as it does at Aldershot GO platform?

VIA Rail will be working closely with GO Transit to expand travelling options for the Hamilton area. However, this is not planned in our short term schedule adjustments.

5. What does VIA Rail plan to do to improve the service time of train 84?

We are currently working on improving this service through discussions with third party infrastructure owners. We are unclear what your question is referring to specifically, and encourage you to send more information to customer_relations@viarail.ca so we can respond with more detail.

6. A few years ago I used to take VIA Rail from Glencoe, ON through Sarnia, Port Huron and on to East Lansing. Why doesn't VIA Rail go through the underground tunnel under the river from Sarnia to Port Huron anymore?

This was a joint service between VIA Rail and Amtrak that was discontinued some time ago due to border delays and low ridership.

7. Why isn't there Business class on trains to and from Stratford and Toronto?

VIA Rail has limited rolling stock equipped for business class service, so we must distribute equipment according to market demand. While the Stratford-Toronto service cannot currently support business class on its own, our goal is to offer Business class on all our trains across the Québec City-Windsor corridor and we are currently working on this.

8. Are there any plans to ever provide a VIA Rail train that can be boarded in Brampton that will travel to Woodstock?

Currently VIA Rail offers a connection between Brampton to Woodstock via train 84 which connects to train 73. Brampton and Woodstock are on separate lines, so we are not able to offer one train that connects the two cities directly

Corridor East

1. VIA Rail mentioned a service increase between Montréal and Québec with the addition of additional frequencies in its last corporate plan published in 2016. I would like to know if these increases will materialize in the coming months.

On May 29, we added one new frequency in each direction between Montréal and Québec City on weekends, and one more direct train to Québec City during the week. We are working actively with CN to acquire additional frequencies to better serve the Québec City, Montréal and Ottawa route during the week.

2. What improvements to the Québec City - Windsor corridor can we expect to see in the near future?

VIA Rail's current focus is on improving its schedule in the Corridor by offering new frequencies to serve more Canadians.

As well, VIA Rail's plan to build High Frequency Rail between Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec City will reduce trip times while simultaneously allowing for increased frequencies and reliability. Please see the High Frequency Rail section for more information.

3. Has VIA Rail had any discussions with Québec-Gatineau Railway in recent months regarding service from Montréal to Trois-Rivières over the QGR mainline on the north shore?

The North Shore line between Montréal and Québec City, owned by the Québec-Gatineau Railway, is one of routes under consideration for VIA Rail's High Frequency Rail (HFR) proposal and services between Montreal – Trois-Rivières are considered in that proposal.

4. Why do you not have more access for passengers at the Brockville station going direct to Montréal? Why do most of the trains go via Ottawa first, and then on to Montréal?

VIA Rail has studied and intends to add an additional morning stop in Brockville on the way to Montréal. We are working with third party infrastructure owners to make this a reality.

With regards to the schedule between Toronto and Ottawa/Montreal, we offer six trains per weekday that travel to Montréal direct from Toronto, and eight trains that travel directly to

Ottawa from Toronto. Only one train (#51) passes through Ottawa on the way to Montreal (Toronto-Ottawa-Montréal train).

5. Could you reinstall the line out west via Ottawa from Montréal direct?

We are unclear as to which train you are referring to and encourage you to contact customer_relations@viarail.ca with further details. However, if you are referring to the train that travelled to Vancouver from Montréal, this train was cut in the early 1990s and we have no plans to reinstate it.

6. Scheduling: Ottawa - Dorval (Montréal) Currently, the service for "extended" day trips is poor. When will the service improve?

I would like to see a train from Ottawa to (Dorval) Montréal, leaving after the "crack of dawn" and between the next trip, mid-morning. Say about 08:00AM or 08:30AM? Is this a soon forthcoming option?

As VIA Rail does not own the infrastructure on which it operates for this route, the number of frequencies we are able to offer is determined by the track owners. Our plan is to increase number of frequencies between Montréal and Ottawa, as we have done successfully between Toronto and Ottawa, by working with the track owners.

As well, VIA Rail's plan to build High Frequency Rail between Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec City will reduce trip times while simultaneously allowing for increased frequencies and reliability. Please see the High Frequency Rail section for more information.

7. Why not consider lower fares between Montréal and Toronto with only one stop in Kingston? Something competitive with Mega Bus four runs each day you would fill the trains and make money in the process.

The fare structure is based on the value of rail transport in terms on comfort, amenities, onboard service etc. On that basis, we believe it to be fair and appropriate.

8. Will there be more departure options from Ste-Foy station?

Are there any plans to add on later service between the Montréal-Ottawa corridor?

We are working on offering more frequencies between Montréal and Ottawa as we have successfully done between Toronto and Ottawa. These new frequencies are subject to ongoing negotiations with the rail infrastructure owner.

As well, VIA Rail's plan to build High Frequency Rail between Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec City will reduce trip times while simultaneously allowing for increased frequencies and reliability. Please see the High Frequency Rail section for more information.

9. Why are there only two trains that stop at Guildwood?

Will you be adding extra trains to/from Cornwall and Toronto?

What are you going to do about full commuter trains running in the morning from Port Hope to Toronto and turning away passengers?

What is being done with the lack of cars/ seats on our commuter trains between Kingston and Toronto?

Stops are determined based on a combination of market demand and the need to offer shorter trip times than car travel. VIA Rail's HRF project will allow for more stops between Toronto and Kingston, including Guildwood and Port Hope. It will also offer more options

between Cornwall and Toronto by using both the current line and the planned HFR line through a connection at Smith Falls.

Finally the HFR project will transform Kingston into a hub with more departures throughout the day to and from Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal.

10. Why can't I get a train from Oakville to Belleville direct without having to change trains?

Why can't I take a train from Saint-Lambert to Joliette on Mondays and Wednesdays?

Our current operating configuration doesn't allow for a direct service from Oakville to Belleville or from Saint-Lambert to Joliette on Mondays and Wednesdays. We are looking into other operational configurations that would allow us to offer this service in the future.

11. Why is the 4PM train from Montreal to Quebec always late?

In our new summer schedule, launched on May 29, 2017, this train's departure time was changed to 16:40 to try and improve its on-time performance and make it more accessible for commuters returning to Québec City at the end of the day.

12. Would love to ride the overnight Toronto-Montreal train again, any hope of it returning?

VIA Rail bases its train frequencies on customer demand. This train was cancelled over 20 years ago due to low ridership and there currently no plans to bring it back.

13. You talked about reviving the old Ottawa to Toronto run which goes through Sharbot Lake. Is this going to happen and will it stop in Sharbot Lake for passengers wishing to go to Ottawa or Toronto?

VIA Rail's HFR project does consider the Sharbot Lake area. Its routing and stops will be finalized after the project is approved. Consultations with the communities in the area are planned to seek their input.

14. The early train to Québec City from Montréal previously departed Central Station at 6:15. Why did you change the departure time?

The schedule was changed due to increased congestion on the rails. We review our schedules and make changes twice a year and try to improve our service.

15. Would VIA Rail please consider having an earlier train from Cobourg into Toronto Union Station?

Why you don't have a train leaving Montréal to Ottawa past 7pm?

We're always looking to improve our schedule in the Québec City – Windsor Corridor. We review our schedules twice a year and are in negotiations with third party infrastructure owners in order to improve our service. Once we have more frequencies, we will be able to create a more robust schedule.

As well, VIA Rail's plan to build High Frequency Rail between Toronto-Ottawa-Montreal-Quebec City will reduce trip times while simultaneously allowing for increased frequencies and reliability. Please see the High Frequency Rail section for more information.

16. Do you plan to add a direct Ottawa-Québec and/or Toronto-Québec route in the future?

While we do not currently offer any direct Toronto-Québec trains, we do offer four trains per weekday that travel Ottawa-Québec direct.

17. Are there any plans in reinstating the later train service from Toronto, stopping in Belleville?

Are you considering expanding the service out of Trenton so that there is more than just the one train in the morning going into Toronto and returning at night?

VIA Rail is currently working with the infrastructure owner to consider frequency options for Trenton Junction, moving forward.

18. In booking my trip in June, I noticed significant changes have been made to the schedule and now only two of the six daily trips to Montréal are direct. That means people like me have to board a train in the west end of Ottawa, get off the train 15 minutes later in the east end of Ottawa, and then wait up to three and one-half hours for another train. I would really appreciate being advised what possible reason VIA Rail has for making such an unusual schedule change that significantly inconveniences their passengers.

We are aware of this issue and are looking into it with the goal of better serving Fallowfield (west end of Ottawa) moving forward.

19. A direct route from downtown Québec City downtown Montréal without transferring, is it considered a priority in your future projects?

In fact, our trains currently travel from Gare Central in downtown Montréal to Gare de Palais in downtown Québec City, without having to transfer.

20. The stopover issue at either Oshawa or Kingston makes travelling to Ottawa way less desirable. Why can't the trains split at Kingston like they used to?

We are unclear exactly what stopover you are referring to. We do split a train in Kingston on Sundays (train 648), however it's only a quick stop. If this does not answer your question, we encourage you to send more detail to customer_relations@viarail.ca, so we can address your concern.

East (Ocean : Montréal-Halifax)

1. I am wondering when a new schedule will be coming out to travel from Windsor to Halifax and back without having a 2-3 hour layover in Montréal?

We are constantly looking at new ways to improve connection times and will take your comments into consideration.

2. When are you going to restore service to Gaspé?

This question was answered during the Annual Public Meeting, which can be watched on [VIA Rail's YouTube channel](#).

The tracks on which VIA Rail operates in the Gaspésie region are owned by the Québec government. In May 2017, the Québec government announced \$100M investment to fix the rail line from Matapédia to Gaspé. VIA Rail intends to resume service in the area once the tracks are deemed safe for passenger rail operation.

3. Why were your fares increased at the Christmas period for sleeper traffic from Halifax to Montréal return?

Base fares for the *Ocean* were set in September 2016 and were not adjusted for travel over the Christmas period.

4. Will the route from Bathurst to Montréal continue or disappear in the near future?

There are no plans to eliminate the current service.

5. A tri-weekly schedule for the *Ocean* does not provide a reasonable service to the people who live along that route. Is there any thought to increasing the frequency of service?

Why is service for travellers out east so poor?

What consideration is being given to improving rail service to Atlantic Canada? Does every train have to provide sleeper accommodation?

Why is it not possible to reinstate the " Rail Liner" (that shuttled between Halifax and Matapédia in both directions, every day) for the passengers who only need to travel between the 2 points along this route i.e., older passengers, students, people who need to travel for medical appointments, etc?

Does VIA Rail still plan to implement daily regional service between Halifax and Moncton in 2017?

Are there any plans to bring passenger trains back to Nova Scotia?

There are no current plans to increase the *Ocean's* frequency, however we are looking at establishing regional train service between Campbellton and Moncton, and Moncton and Halifax. These trains would travel from Campbellton to Moncton and from Moncton to Halifax in the morning, and then back from Halifax to Moncton and from Moncton to Campbellton at the end of the business day, five days a week (Monday to Friday). We are currently working with our infrastructure partners on this project.

6. Will VIA Rail ever restore the Bras d'Or service from Sydney to Halifax?

VIA Rail has no plans to restore this service.

West (Canadian: Toronto - Vancouver)

1. Will VIA Rail be opening their service on Vancouver Island anytime soon?

Service on Vancouver Island was ceased in 2011 due to unsafe track conditions. VIA Rail can resume its service on the Vancouver Island once the rail infrastructure and tracks have been rehabilitated, inspected, and are considered safe for passenger rail operations. We do not have any information regarding the timeline for this, as it is handled by the Island Corridor Foundation and other third parties.

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2. Will VIA Rail service ever return to the Southern Route - Winnipeg/Regina/Calgary?

VIA Rail has no plans to restore this service.

3. Why is Lake Superior or any of the other Great Lakes bypassed on the *Canadian's* route?

VIA Rail operates primarily on CN lines on routes west of Toronto (except for a small portion of directional running on CP lines) and the CN line runs north of the Great Lakes. We are always looking for opportunities to improve our services, but it is difficult to change our routes because of our desire to continue to serve the needs of the communities currently served, and those of the crews and depot locations. As well, changes such as these are based on negotiations with the infrastructure owners.

4. What plans (if any) do you have for the west?

VIA Rail is always looking for ways to improve its services. Many upgrades and improvements have recently been made to the *Canadian*, especially to the Prestige class experience, and we recently conducted a recent warm food trial and a Nespresso Coffee pilot project. In terms of our routes and schedule, we have no plans for any changes at this time.

5. Will the *Canadian* ever return to daily service during the three month summer period?

There are no plans to increase the *Canadian's* service.

6. When are the berths coming back?

We still have berths on the *Canadian*.

7. Have you thought of making it more private and sanitary for people wanting to travel across Canada by offering more private accommodations with the sleeper cars?

We have several private accommodation options with private washrooms in our sleeper cars that sleep one, two, three, or four people. We also have private rooms in Prestige class with a private washroom and shower.

8. Why don't you have a train that goes directly from Prince Rupert to Vancouver?

Thank you for your suggestion. There is no track that goes directly from Prince Rupert to Vancouver. The nearest track connects from Prince George to Vancouver. VIA Rail used to connect with a service by another rail operator at Prince George, however, that operator is no longer in business.

9. Can you ever arrange for the VIA Rail trip to not always be at night time when you cannot view a thing from Saskatoon to Edmonton?

Would it not be a good idea to have your west bound and east bound trains run at different times in the mountains, so that where one direction travels day/night be switch for the opposite direction?

The *Canadian's* schedule is designed to maximize daylight viewing time in the Rockies, and to arrive in the major cities along its route at reasonable hours.

10. Are there any plans to connect the eastern and western transcontinental routes so the journey from Halifax to Vancouver could be done on one train rather than three?

Have you given any thought to only stopping the *Canadian* at a few major cities and running smaller and cheaper commuter trains from all the little whistle stops along the way?

Thank you for your suggestion. Our mandate is to serve Canadians from coast to coast. We are always looking to configure our schedules in such a way that maximizes the number of Canadian communities we serve. Schedule updates are made twice a year and we take into consideration all the feedback we receive from passengers, as well as the demand in the area.

11. Would VIA Rail consider a Vancouver to Toronto service that stopped overnight like the Rocky Mountaineer?

Currently passengers on the *Canadian* can do a layover stop and continue their journey on the next train two or three days later. The majority of feedback from passengers taking our *Canadian* train is that they appreciate having sleeping accommodation on board.

Regional (Remote)

1. Explain to me why there is no train service from Alexandria/Ottawa/North Bay?

Currently VIA Rail doesn't have access to infrastructure that goes to North Bay, so we cannot offer service to that area.

2. Is it possible to please increase the service to northern Ontario such as the Toronto to Sudbury route?

There are no plans to increase service at this time.

3. The regional trains are an obligation of the Government of Canada to serve remote communities. Why does VIA Rail neglect these regional services?

VIA Rail has made several customer-centric changes to our Regional Services of the past few years, such as adding a dining and Park car to our Churchill service in peak season. The General Manager for Regional Services, is tasked with the responsibility of enhancing our remote services. He has met with local authorities in Senneterre, Jonquière, Churchill, and Prince Rupert, and he has developed tourism and travel offerings that have been very popular with travellers in those regions. In 2016 our revenues and ridership for regional services increased. Thanks to our General Manager's leadership and our partners in those regions, VIA Rail's offer has been enhanced, making some of Canada's best vistas available to more Canadians.

4. Are there specific plans to expand VIA service in Northern Ontario, say, for example, along the Huron Central freight line between Sudbury and Sault Ste. Marie, or north on the Ontario Northland line between North Bay and Cochrane?

There are no plans to expand service at this time.

5. Why do you insist on cutting the frequency of the few trains that remain outside the Québec City - Windsor corridor?

VIA Rail has not made any service reductions since 2012.

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- 6. What are VIA Rail's plans to respond to precarious weather situations (flooding, storms) in northern Manitoba given that VIA Rail offers an essential service in many communities.**

VIA Rail will continue to provide service where the track infrastructure is safe for passenger service. As of June 9, 2017, following flooding on the railway, we are serving the communities of northern Manitoba as far as Gillam and working with an inter-modal partner to get passengers from Gillam to Churchill safely.

- 7. When service is cancelled why can't alternate transportation options be offered? This is especially crucial on the Hudson Bay Line, an essential service line which receives subsidies. Why can't you work with an air carrier to negotiate a deal to get people to their destinations?**

When a service is cancelled, VIA Rail communicates this to customers who have reservations on the impacted trains. VIA Rail's policy is to get travellers whose trips are already in progress to their destination in which case alternative forms of transportation may be used, however, we are not able to provide alternate transportation for those whose trips have not yet started.

- 8. Do you anticipate changes in Winnipeg-Churchill service?**

As of June 9, 2017, due to flooding, service from Gillam to Churchill has been suspended indefinitely. VIA Rail will resume its services between Gillam and Churchill once inspections of the railway have been completed and the tracks have been inspected and declared safe for passenger train operation.

Fares

- 1. How will you lower prices for rail travel to make it more affordable for younger people and keep money in the Canadian economy for tourism and travel?**

We already offer a variety of fares suited to different budgets and needs, as well as rail passes such as the Youth Summer Pass, Unlimited Semester Pass, and VIA 6 Pak that are specifically for youth. We encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) to be notified about future promotions.

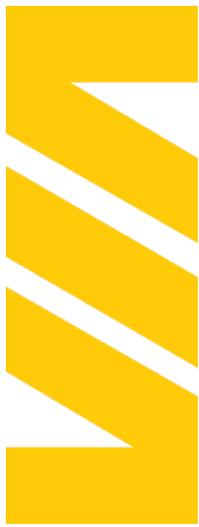
- 2. VIA Rail is a public transit so why is it so expensive?**

This question was answered during the Annual Public Meeting, which can be watched on [VIA Rail's YouTube channel](#).

- 3. What measures will be taken to make train travel (specifically the *Canadian*) cheaper?**

We already offer a variety of fares suited to different budgets and needs, as well as rail pass products like the CanRailPass. We also offer Sleeper Plus class deals every day. We encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) to be notified about future promotions.

- 4. Would you consider standardizing prices so travellers can predict what their trip is going to cost, or at least explain why prices vary so much?**



Our fares in every class are always available online, so you can check prices for the day you want to travel. If you want to ensure price certainty, you can purchase one of our pass products, such as the VIA 6 Pak, BizPak, or Commuter Pass.

- 5. What justifies the price increase for a round trip from Sainte-Foy to Bathurst when the rooms have aged badly and are falling apart, the blinds on the windows have been replaced with thin pieces of fabric, the alarm bells don't work, the duvet covers haven't changed in 20 years, and the staff, reduced to a minimum, don't even have time to prepare the beds anymore, let alone come in an emergency?**

The last price increase for the *Ocean* went into effect on January 1, 2017. We make every effort to maintain a high standard of service on our trains, while keeping our equipment in good operating condition. All of our equipment is inspected and maintained on a predetermined schedule in an effort to assure reliability. In addition, equipment is scheduled to be cleaned and checked before each train is dispatched, to ensure that it is in good working order. If malfunctions cannot be repaired en route, they are corrected after the train reaches its final destination.

- 6. How do you get the best price when travelling between Montréal and a station between Toronto? It often costs more for Montréal – Cobourg than Montréal – Toronto which is longer.**

Why is it more expensive to travel from Napanee to Toronto than to go from Kingston to Toronto?

The fare for an intermediary stop from a larger urban center should always be equal or less than the fare for a ticket between two larger urban centers. Our fares are based on availability and demand, which can vary depending on the segment you want to travel and when you make your reservation. As such, it may happen that all the available seats at the lowest fare have sold out for an intermediary stop, while there are still some available seats available for the larger urban centre, in which case the intermediary stop will appear more expensive.

- 7. Would you ever consider bringing back the companion travelling fees?**

It is unclear which fee you are referring to as we have never charged a companion traveller fee. Please contact customer relations (customer_relations@viarail.ca) with more information, and they will be happy to answer your question.

- 8. Why don't you have specials for seniors and families to encourage them to see Canada by rail?**

We offer several promotions aimed at seniors and children both seasonally and year round. Seniors receive a discount all year round, please refer to the Senior's section of this document for more information. Kids aged 2-11 always get a 50% discount on their travel. This summer, once again, kids can travel anywhere in Canada for \$15. We encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) to be notified about future promotions.

- 9. Why is the military service discount not visible/accessible from the normal choices in the reservation process on line?**

To use the military discount when purchasing tickets online, select "Corporate Rate" as the discount type on the "Passenger Information" screen, and enter the discount code you have been given (no serial number is required). You must pick up your boarding pass at the station by showing one of the recognized forms of [DND identification](#).

10. Is there any way single parents can be taken into consideration for special rates in the 2017-2018 promotional campaign?

Our discounts are designed for use by individuals and are available to all travellers, single or otherwise. There is no fare plan in place that requires someone to be in a relationship to qualify.

11. If you want to increase ridership, which I agree is the right direction for Ontario, why do your rates increase as the travel date approaches?

Pricing is dynamic and varies according to supply and demand. Generally, as the travel date approaches there is greater demand and fewer seats available, although this is not always the case.

12. Why do I never see discounts for Québec City – Toronto? They are always separated by Montréal.

Currently our discounts are offered on a by-route basis (i.e., Toronto-Montréal, Montréal-Québec City), but we are looking into offering discounts on an origin-destination basis.

13. Why do we pay one price to go to Québec City and a higher price to return to St Lambert?

During the booking process, round trips are considered as two one-way trips. The reservation system gives you the lowest available fare for each trip based on your departure city. Therefore, prices may vary depending on demand.

14. Often you have promotions departing from Montréal. When will you have something similar departing from Québec City?

In fact, we do offer many discounts for travel from Québec City including several through our Discount Tuesdays promotion.

15. Why does VIA Rail no longer advertise 50% off sales on Business class? Will this continue to be the policy?

We no longer have the 50% off sale because we now offer everyday low fares, which was not the case a few years ago.

16. Do you have packages available - return train destinations with accommodations - for singles and/or families to visit various Ontario communities?

Since you require an overnight at Prince George in both directions (I realize why, because of the desire to have daylight runs for seeing the scenery), why don't you put together a reasonably-priced train/lodging package?

We are not a tour operator and do not offer travel packages; however, there are tour operators who do offer this service. You can start your search through our website under the "train-hotel packages" page found here: <http://www.viarail.ca/en/fares-and-packages/offers>

17. Could/does/would VIA Rail consider setting up an "on-line" office, with agent's available to assist, specializing in travel package (hotel, were & when required) organization/assistance, for those, like myself, whom are/have considered a "Coast to Coast", rail trip?

Our customer service centers are open to help you with your train reservations. You can call us toll-free from anywhere in Canada: 1 888 VIA-RAIL. However, we do not specialize in hotel or travel packages. For this, you would need to go to a travel agent or tour operator.

18. Are you going to offer special rates for the summer months to Ottawa? I am interested.

This summer all kids aged 2-11 travel for \$15 to any destination, including Ottawa. We will also continue our Discount Tuesday offers, which often include travel to or from Ottawa. We encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) to be notified about future promotions.

19. Will VIA Rail be having special kids fares this summer like you did for 2016?

Yes, this summer kids aged 2-11 can travel for \$15 across Canada.

20. Do you ever offer "Family" rates?

Currently our reservation system does not allow us to offer "family travel" ticket packages. We have initiated the process to replace our reservation system. The new system will provide greater flexibility so we can meet this demand.

21. I know when you're an hour late you get a half price fare for the next trip. I know CN owns the tracks and they know your schedule (the same schedule for years) so why do they consistently delay your VIA Rail trains? I know they do it on purpose to show you that they own the tracks. So if the train is a half an hour late should be half price if it is an hour your fare should be free.

VIA Rail operates mostly on third-party-owned tracks and the volume of trains today (passenger, freight, and commuter) challenges the capacity of the infrastructure. VIA Rail works with its freight and regional passenger railway partners to minimize these conflicts and the related passenger inconveniences. VIA Rail is currently working on a High Frequency Rail project that would allow us to offer more trains which could run at their full speed and on time.

VIA Rail's Late Train Travel Credit policy offers travel credits for delays exceeding one hour when the final destination is in the Québec City - Windsor corridor. More details are available on our [website](#).

22. What is "escape"?

"Escape" is our lowest fare class. It is available to those booking online.

23. Does VIA Rail have familiarization rates for travel professionals?

VIA Rail does offer a familiarization rate for travel professionals. Please contact our sales department for more information or your company's headquarters for one of the AD75s already allotted to your organization.

24. I travel to Ottawa quite often and particularly like First Class/VIA1. Are there any sales coming up in the future?

We encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) to be notified about future promotions as we don't always know when sales will be announced. We would also suggest you look into our Bizpak for further savings.

25. Can you create a promotion for travellers taking VIA Rail every week for a round trip in the economy seats (8 rides a month Ottawa-Montréal and return)?

If you travel frequently, we offer a Commuter Pass (20 one-way/10 round trip credits valid for 30 days) and Bizpak (10 one-way credits valid for a year) for travel between two predetermined cities.

26. What are the top three contributors to the increase in fares within the Corridor?

The increase of average revenue per passenger is mostly due to three factors: (1) more passengers who are (2) taking longer trips and (3) the implementation of revenue management tools that optimize the revenue opportunities dynamically based on market demand.

27. Why can't I buy a Commuter Pass for Trenton and use the pass to buy trips from either Trenton OR Cobourg – or go in to Toronto from Cobourg and return to Trenton? If I've paid for the distance to Trenton, surely it shouldn't be a problem to do it this way?

You can buy trips from either Trenton or Cobourg with your Toronto-Trenton Commuter Pass. As stated in the conditions, "each travel credit is valid for a one-way trip on any VIA Rail train (unless specified otherwise on your Commuter ePasses) in Economy class in either direction between the two cities shown on the ePass or points in between." (emphasis added)

28. Why can't I buy a pass that gives me 'x' number of trips that I can use over a longer period?

We have several pass products that are valid for longer periods. Our Bizpaks give travellers 10 one-way travel credits between two predetermined cities and are valid for up one year. The Network CanRailPass offers 7, 10, or unlimited one-way trips across Canada valid for 60 days, while the Corridor CanRailPass offers 7 or 10 one-way trips valid for 21 days.

Canada 150

1. Can we please have more Canada 150 tickets?

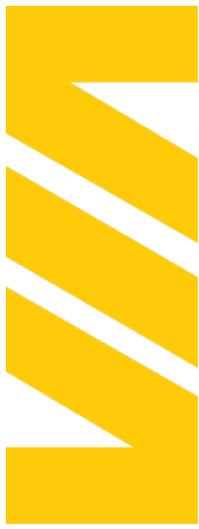
This question was answered during the Annual Public Meeting, which can be watched on [VIA Rail's YouTube channel](#).

2. Why was the issue regarding the Canada 150 passes dealt with so badly and no compensation given to the unhappy customers who had been lied to? Why are there no unlimited passes for people over 25? Why are the prices so outrageous even when the train (especially in places further north and in winter months) is empty?

I am a student and I am 31 years old. I am very upset that I could not purchase the Canada 150 pass because of my age. Why is this?

In order to address the high demand, we increased the number of passes originally offered from 1867 to 4000. Due to the fixed number of seats available and the need to maintain our level of service for other passengers across the network, we were not able to offer any more.

Our Youth fares are also available to those over 26 who are full time students with a valid ISIC card.



We do offer a Network CanRailPass which gives travellers 7, 10, or unlimited one-way trips across Canada within a 60 day period.

Our prices vary according to market demand, and during off peak season (November to March), prices are generally lower.

- 3. I only found out about a special VIA Rail 150 pass after they were all sold out. When you have any deals like this, are they always advertised on the VIA Rail website?**

The Canada 150 Youth Pass was listed on viarail.ca as soon as it became available. New products like this are always introduced on viarail.ca.

- 4. Will VIA Rail be offering unlimited rail travel tickets for \$150 for travel within Canada during September and October, 2017?**

We have no plans to do so at this time. We encourage you to keep looking at our website for specials throughout the year.

- 5. In honour of Canada's 150th birthday, you offered students a wonderful fare, why can you not do the same for seniors?**

This particular pass was aimed at getting young people involved in the Canada 150 celebrations. We encourage you to keep looking at our website for seniors' discounts.

- 6. Why in this 150 year anniversary, is VIA Rail not authorizing a free trip across or anywhere in Canada to Veterans and their spouse?**

We offer veterans, military members and their families 25% off the best available fare for travel year-round, anywhere in the country (subject to conditions). As part of the Canada 150 celebrations this summer, VIA Rail is offering for veterans and military a new discount of 35% off travel for destinations such as Churchill, Prince Rupert, White River and Northern Québec.

Discount Tuesday

- 1. Discount Tuesday sales are usually mostly only 10% price reduction. That is not really an incentive unless you were already planning to travel anyway and you now tweak a bit.**

The Discount Tuesday offer is a 12.5% reduction off our lowest fare and we make sure to have greater availability of tickets on Tuesdays to accommodate as many people as possible.

- 2. You do have sales on Tuesdays, how is it I cannot benefit from them? My tickets are expensive most of the time. I did talk to a clerk at the station and he said to buy early. My response was that I'm doing that and it makes no difference. I'd like to know when to buy.**

Discount Tuesday tickets are available as of 4am (EST) every Tuesday morning. We also encourage you to [sign up for our newsletter](#) to be notified about future promotions and check our website for specials throughout the year.

- 3. Love the Tuesday fare specials but they sell out so fast or there is only a very small amount of seats included- will you be increasing your offerings?**

We strive to ensure ample availability of Discount Tuesday fares.

4. Why do you not have any more Tuesday deals for first class?

We now offer everyday low fares in Business Class, therefore it is not included in the Discount Tuesday offer.

5. I would take the train more often but I am ticked that I can almost always get a discount ticket from Toronto to Ottawa or Montréal - and am expected to pay more for a trip from Toronto to Kingston. You know almost every Ottawa or Montréal train goes through Kingston. This makes no sense - and it bugs me enough that I drive. Why do you have this silly practice?

On Discount Tuesdays, great deals are offered from Kingston to Toronto/Montreal. However, for residents of Belleville, the deals are not so great. When will we be receiving these great discounts?

I subscribe to your Discount Tuesday specials. I often see good fares for the Montréal / Québec route. I live in Drummondville, which is a stop along this route. Can I take advantage of these discounts?

The fare for an intermediary stop from a larger urban center should always be equal or less than the fare for a ticket between two larger urban centers. Our fares are based on availability and demand, which can vary depending on the segment you want to travel and when you make your reservation. As such, it may happen that all the available seats at the lowest fare have sold out for an intermediary stop, while there are still some available seats available for the larger urban centre, in which case the intermediary stop will appear more expensive.

6. Is it possible to vary the Discount Tuesday offers? Ex. 50% off for kids travelling with their grandmothers?

Kids ages 2-11 already travel for 50% off year round, and for the summer kids aged 2-11 can travel anywhere in Canada for \$15. All other discounts, including Discount Tuesday offers are available to any individual.

Seniors

1. Given our rapidly aging population, especially the "baby boomers", where is the "VIA Rail push" to increase its customer base by promoting the availability and accessibility of its passenger and sleeping cars?

VIA Rail revisits its advertising strategy on an ongoing basis. We use many tactics to increase awareness and usage of VIA Rail passenger train services throughout Canada. In the last year, VIA Rail's ridership has been continually increasing, due in part to its advertising strategy.

2. Cobourg is a town of retirees, and many enjoy travelling on a regular basis. Have you considered having a package rate for seniors, meaning, being able to buy a package of 5 trips for two, to specific Canadian towns during a calendar year?

We currently offer several pass products that might suit your needs, such as the Bizpaks (10 one-way travel credits between two predetermined cities valid for one year), the Network CanRailPass (7, 10, or unlimited one-way trips across Canada valid for 60 days) and the Corridor CanRailPass (7 or 10 one-way trips valid for 21 days).

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3. What ever happened to your senior's discount rates to the West coast on off peak times?

We have a [Sleeper Plus class deals](#) section on our website with discounts that are available to everyone year-round. Seniors also receive a 10% discount on full fare all year round.

4. What would be the most economical time of year to travel cross Canada by rail? We are seniors and would like to give it a try.

The most economical time to travel across Canada is during the low season (November to March).

5. As a senior who is a Préférence card holder, I still find the train expensive on my limited income. Will there ever be such a thing as a rail pass, as there is in other parts of our fair planet?

We offer currently several pass products such as the Network CanRailPass (7, 10, or unlimited one-way trips across Canada valid for 60 days) and the Corridor CanRailPass (7 or 10 one-way trips valid for 21 days). We also have a [Sleeper Plus class deals](#) section on our website with discounts that are available to everyone, year-round.

6. There is a discount for people 65 and over, how much does it cost to travel to western Canada?

Our Senior discount (10% of full fare) is available to anyone 60 and over. Please check our website for fares as they vary depending on the time of year.

7. Will VIA Rail ever offer the two for one for seniors again?

This is not a promotion that is being considered at this time, however keep an eye out for future offers targeted at seniors.

8. I am a 70 year old retiree. I would like to know if you have a special price for people with disabilities.

While VIA Rail does not offer special fares for passengers with disabilities, they may be entitled to a free train ticket for a support person to travel with them if their doctor recommends that they cannot travel alone. More details are available on our [website](#).

9. VIA Rail has a category of membership called "Senior"; however, there is no seniors rate for travel. Why not?

Seniors receive a 10% discount on the full fare all year round, as well as a discount on our Network and Corridor CanRailPass. We also offer special promotional offers for seniors from time to time.

Booking

1. How can I be sure that the seat I book is facing forward?

Can the online ticketing system be modified to either give the passenger the option of saying "no" to quad seats or to have a letter code indicating a seat is part of a quad?

Currently passengers who are concerned with their seat orientation can call the VIA Customer Centre after booking their ticket to change their seat orientation if required.

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2. When will we be able to select our seats when booking online instead of the "pot-luck" system that you are using now?

Our current reservation system does not provide the functionality for seat selection. We have initiated the process to replace our reservation system which will make it possible for us to offer this long-awaited functionality by 2020.

3. When booking a round trip online, how can I choose to arrive in downtown Montréal, but depart on the return from Dorval?

To book a round trip arriving in Montréal and departing from Dorval you can either book two separate one way trips or use the "multi-city" option which allow this scenario to be completed in one single transaction.

4. Are there plans in the near future to make changes to the online ticketing process for commuters and enhancements to VIA Rail app?

We have initiated the process to replace our reservation system by 2020, which will make many enhancements and new functionalities possible. We will continue to maintain our online transactional websites and apps until then.

5. As a commuter I find the expiry date of passes too short and they need to be extended. We also need to see something where we do not have to book an individual ticket every day. We should be able to book multi tickets. Has VIA Rail considered or even looked into this?

The commuter passes were conceived for passengers who travel on a daily basis. Although we currently do not have multi-ticket packets for individual passengers, we will take this suggestion into consideration.

6. How can we use gift cards online?

Our current reservation system doesn't allow passengers to purchase or redeem gift cards online. We have initiated the process to replace our reservation system by 2020 which will make it possible to offer this long awaited functionality.

7. Why are assigned seats in economy assigned at the time tickets are purchased in advance but upon boarding the expected ticketed seats have been changed without prior notification to the ticket purchaser?

This spring I have experienced an abnormal amount of "equipment changes" between Montréal and Québec City. Why can't you manage seat changes better when this happens?

When a car has a mechanical issue and has to be replaced, the replacement car may not have the same seat configuration as the original car. Customers will then receive an updated boarding pass with a new car and seat number. However, if the equipment change happens at the last minute, Network Operations Communications contacts all affected passengers using the email address they provided at booking and lets them know that their seat assignment has been cancelled. When they board, the onboard employees will seat customers according to an adjusted seat assignment. We are currently in the process of reviewing this procedure.

8. If you ask VIA Rail's reservation system for a ticket from London to Niagara Falls, it has you transfer from VIA to GO at Oakville. That results in higher fares on both VIA

Rail and GO, and in some cases longer trip times, than if you transferred in Aldershot. Why do you want passengers to transfer in Oakville instead of Aldershot?

Thank you for bringing this to our attention. We are looking into why this is the case and will initiate appropriate changes if possible. We will follow up with you when we have a more detailed answer.

9. Will you continue overselling your Business class seats and should we discontinue travelling in Business class?

VIA Rail does not overbook on any of its trains or in any service class. On occasion when a car has a mechanical issue and has to be replaced, the replacement car may not have the same capacity or seat configuration which may result in an insufficient number of seats for the number of tickets originally sold. This occurrence is very rare in Business class.

10. When will Air Miles vouchers be usable online rather than just in station?

You may purchase a VIA Rail gift card (not an Air Miles voucher) through the Air Miles website. Our current reservation system doesn't allow gift cards to be redeemed online, only in station. We have initiated the process to replace our reservation system by 2020 which will make it possible to offer this functionality.

Inter-modality

1. What is the latest on over the border rail travel (not bus connection) at Windsor or Sarnia for travel to Chicago?

Would VIA Rail ever consider once again incorporating the Amtrak train from Chicago operating through to and returning from Toronto in your schedule?

We currently have no plans to operate to Chicago.

2. Any consideration to having the last train leaving Montreal for Ottawa be rescheduled to half hour or 45 minutes past the scheduled arrival of the Amtrak from New York? I hate having to make the last leg of my trip via bus?

At the moment, there are no plans to change the scheduled departure times. We do review and revise our schedule twice a year with the goal to improve based on customer demand. We will take your suggestion into consideration.

3. I like to take the earliest train from Ottawa to Toronto to see my grandkids. The train leaves 5 minutes before the morning OC bus connection arrives at the Tremblay Station from Orleans. Cab fare adds \$35 to my trip. Is there any way to co-ordinate this connection?

We are currently reviewing the partnership we have with OC Transpo for better integration of our schedules. We will take your comments into consideration, please stay tuned for further developments.

4. We continue to urge VIA Rail to negotiate integration of corridor busing with train schedules to enable access to trains at hub stations on the North Line such as Stratford. What steps have been taken to enable this network?

Thank you for your suggestion. Since 2014, our focus has been to bring more train service to the communities on the North mainline, for which we are in negotiations with the third party

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infrastructure owners. In regards to schedule integration with bus transportation partners, we are pleased to provide access to our stations and online ticketing facilities to local and regional bus partners.

5. Is anything being done to re-establish a connection between VIA Rail and Maritime Bus in Truro, for travel to/from Antigonish and Sydney?

Working in conjunction with Maritime Bus, we will review the possibility of re-establishing a connection between VIA Rail service and Antigonish/Sydney.

6. Would VIA Rail schedule its *Canadian* to connect with the re-started Algoma Central Railway passenger train at Oba, Ontario, if both railways wished to co-ordinate?

The schedule of the *Canadian* is based on passenger demand within the current operational framework. Although there are no plans to connect with Algoma Central Railways, should there be a mutually beneficial opportunity in the future, VIA Rail would be happy to review any possibilities.

7. Is VIA Rail a party to the discussions to provide a transportation terminal for interconnections between rail, airport, Greyhound bus service and transit service in Edmonton, AB?

In 2016, Greyhound bus services were integrated into our Edmonton Station. VIA Rail encourages and would be interested in any further initiatives that would increase the use of our services through intermodal partnerships at our current location.

8. Is there any way to provide some kind of feeder service or connections from smaller towns, like Perth ON, by partnering with a local bus or other transportation provider or by allowing ticket holders to collaborate and carpool?

VIA Rail has a variety of transportation partners across the country to increase access to its network. If there are service providers in Perth, or other communities not served directly by VIA Rail, who would be interested in partnering with VIA Rail, we would be happy to review any opportunities.

9. When you book a VIA Rail/Maritime Bus intermodal trip on your web site, you are warned "VIA Rail Canada and Maritime Bus are not liable for missed connections." Why would anyone book such a trip when you risk being stranded in mid-journey if a train is late and a connection is missed?

Passengers are able to book both service together in one transaction. Connections are not guaranteed, but you will be booked on the next available service without any fees if there is a missed connection, which is not the case if you book them independently.

10. Why does your reservations system not allow bookings to/from the Sauvé station on the AMT Mascouche line?

Starting on July 3, 2017, train #600, 601, 602, 603, 604 and 606 will stop at the Sauvé and Anjou Réseau de transport métropolitain (formerly the AMT) stations. In order to meet the highest safety standards for travellers, trains will no longer stop at Ahuntsic and L'Assomption stations. VIA Rail passengers will have the opportunity to use the new stops at Sauvé or Anjou, or to board the train in Joliette.

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Equipment

1. **Does VIA Rail still have the older Business class cars with a 2-2 configuration? If so, when can we expect them to be converted to the modernized, 1-2 configuration?**

When will VIA Rail finally get rid of your old business cars with 4 seats across and the tiny table that cannot even hold a meal tray?

Why does VIA Rail use 1950s or later dome car with the upholstery all frayed and in some cases falling off the back of the seats entirely?

When will your trains, particularly the Toronto to Kitchener/Oakville run, be updated?

When will VIA Rail refurbish its Economy fare seats? The pullout extensions for sleeping/relaxing, while a great idea, but awfully heavy to manage.

In its latest budget, VIA Rail's shareholder, the Government of Canada, provided significant funding for the refurbishment of some of its fleet. Management is developing plans to ensure the best use of these monies with a view to complete the work by 2020. Any interior design changes will take into consideration your comments.

2. **Why has VIA Rail reduced legroom in Business class a car?**

In reconfiguring the Business Class cars to the 50/50 layout, the spacing between the seats in half the car was reduced by one inch from 39 to 38 inches. The spacing between the seats in the other half of the car remained unchanged at 39 inches.

3. **Is it possible to put new seats in the trains that run from Prince George to Prince Rupert?**

We have recently done an inventory to assess the condition of the seats on these trains and we are working on a program to replace the seats most in need of repair.

4. **Most of the new seats in the cars on the Toronto-Ottawa route seem to be made of molded plastic. Have you given any thought to changing the seats out for ones that are more comfortable for longer rides?**

We do not run any trains with seats that are made from molded plastic. To better respond to your question, more information is needed, and we encourage you to contact customer_relations@viarail.ca so that we can properly address your concerns.

5. **Given the recent University of Toronto study of pollution given off by diesel trains, what is VIA Rail planning to do to reduce the pollution and particulate emissions of its trains?**

VIA Rail has done similar testing to its trains with very good results. As well, in its latest budget VIA Rail's shareholder, the Government of Canada, provided significant funding for the renovation of some of its fleet. Management is developing plans to ensure the best use of these monies with a view to complete the work by 2020, including the opportunity to greatly enhance the environmental performance of these locomotives by bringing them to the current pollution standards.

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- 6. Either the past couple of trains have been older models with no power outlets at seats. I had the comfort of knowing there would be power outlets at my seat for laptops or cell phone. Have the trains removed the outlets? Are they only on certain trains now? Is it only available for certain classes?**

VIA Rail has not removed nor does it intend to remove at-seat power outlets. In fact, the vast majority of our cars are equipped with power outlets at each seat. In order for us to properly address your questions, please send additional info (such as train number and car number) to customer_relations@viarail.ca and we will be happy to follow up.

- 7. What kind of overnight accommodations do you have for two people in a room that does not have bunk beds?**

Our Prestige class on the *Canadian* train (Toronto - Vancouver) has a double bed.

- 8. Why is it that VIA Rail does not seem to have bedrooms with showers for 1 person?**

Half of the bedrooms on our Renaissance cars, which run between Montreal – Halifax, are equipped with private showers. On our *Canadian* train, operating between Toronto – Vancouver, private showers are available in our Prestige class rooms.

- 9. On the occasional trip from Halifax, there is a second observation car available for non-sleeping car passengers. Can this be made available all the time, and if not, can the lone observation car be available for "all" passengers, as there hasn't been a "full house" on any of the recent trips I have taken.**

When a single observation car is available on the train, we reserve it as part of the Sleeper Plus offer.

- 10. Why are all VIA Rail platforms six feet below the level of the corridor inside the trains? Why are the exit doors so narrow?**

Low level access platforms are the preferred choice of all the freight railways (who own 97% of the track on which VIA Rail operates) to ensure that their trains are clear of the platform as they pass the station at track speed. The only high level platforms can be found in stations that do not have freight through traffic (such as Montreal Central Station or Québec City's Gare du Palais). Currently we are building high level platforms at Ottawa Station.

Regarding the exit doors, at the time when the trains we now own were built, the door size was standard. All newer trains are now built with wider doors. Our next fleet will have wide doors to ensure greater accessibility.

- 11. Are the rooms formerly called "Drawing Rooms" or "Triple Bedrooms" still available on the *Canadian*?**

The rooms formerly called the "Drawing Room" or "Triple Bedroom" are found on our Chateau cars, which are only added to the consist if needed during periods of high demand. The use of these cars is unpredictable, the triple bedroom is not often available to reserve.

- 12. When funds are available, have you given any thought to updating some of the (old) Chateau cars used on the *Canadian* to Manor standards?**

Currently, there are no plans to update the Chateau cars to Manor standards.

- 13. Have you ever considered reversing the seating in the Skyline domes similar to the Park cars in order to improve night viewing?**

The seats on the Skyline car are fixed and cannot be turned around. As well, the car itself cannot be turned around as the ventilation system was built to run in one direction and would not work in reverse.

14. Could you add colourful murals of Canadian scenery and wild animals to the *Canadian*?

Thank you for your suggestion. We have no plans to add murals to the *Canadian* train at this time. However, there are already some pieces of art that can be found in our mural lounge on select Park cars.

50/50 seating

1. What is the theory behind having half of the coach with seats facing backwards?

The 50/50 seating configuration allows VIA Rail to operate more efficiently and is the standard for commuter and inter-city trains globally. Using this configuration means that trains no longer need to be turned around at destination, which is a big time saving measure, and provides VIA Rail with flexibility when enhancing our train schedules and potentially adding frequencies.

2. Does VIA plan to impose a service charge for passengers to choose their own seat?

As of this time we have no plans to impose a service charge for choosing a seat.

Fleet Renewal

VIA Rail's Québec City – Windsor corridor fleet is approaching the end of its useful life and needs to be replaced with newer, greener cars and locomotives. Renewing the fleet would significantly improve the customer experience and could increase our ridership. The Government of Canada has acknowledged our need for a new fleet, and Budget 2016 provided VIA Rail with funding to support technical studies and other pre-procurement activities related to the fleet renewal. In December, we submitted a detailed business case for the fleet renewal to Transport Canada. Learn more about VIA Rail's fleet renewal proposal [here](#).

1. Does VIA Rail plan to modernize their fleet in the near future?

VIA Rail's fleet is one of the oldest in the industry, making it increasingly costly to maintain. Half of the Quebec-Windsor Corridor fleet, serving 90% of VIA Rail customers, is coming to the end of its life-cycle.

We continue to work with the Federal Government to underscore the importance of renewing the fleet in the very short term. VIA Rail submitted a business case in December, 2016 to the Government of Canada for the renewal of its train fleet.

2. When will the Renaissance cars now in use on the *Ocean* reach the end of their useful service life? What is VIA Rail doing to procure replacements for those cars? Is VIA Rail committed to maintaining sleeping and dining car service on the Montréal-Halifax route when a new generation of cars enters service?

In December, 2016 VIA Rail submitted a business case to the Government of Canada for the renewal of its train fleet. A new fleet for the corridor could potentially allow us to repurpose,

through a renovation project, existing equipment to benefit other parts of VIA Rail's network. With regards to the sleeping and dining cars, we have no plans to change our operating model.

- 3. With no funding yet allocated and, consequently, no builder yet selected to produce the required corridor fleet, will VIA Rail be reducing its current service beginning in 2020 (as the Summary of the 2016-2020 Corporate Plan warns)? If not, how does the corporation propose resolving this equipment gap?**

In its latest budget, VIA Rail's shareholder, the Government of Canada, provided significant funding for the refurbishment some of its fleet. Management is developing plans to ensure the best use of these monies with a view to complete the work by 2020, including using the renovated cars to backfill the withdrawal of the first 40 LRC cars. Thus the current Corridor capacity will be maintained until 2023.

- 4. Given that VIA Rail will need replacement cars for its long distance fleet, has VIA Rail looked at the Viewliner II baggage, dining and sleeping cars currently being produced for Amtrak by CAF?**

There are no plans to acquire a new long distance fleet.

Infrastructure

- 1. Who do we contact to ensure cleanliness and safety along the tracks and at or near rail crossings?**

Safety is a top priority for VIA Rail. The approximately 300 km of track owned by VIA Rail are patrolled regularly by our staff to ensure the safety of train operations and all VIA Rail staff and contractors are trained to report any concern. If there is something you would like to bring to our attention, please contact customer_relations@viarail.ca with more details and the nearest mile post.

- 2. Are you still aiming to purchase the London to Kitchener portion of the line and improve track conditions?**

VIA Rail is in discussion with the infrastructure owner, CN, regarding the potential purchase. No decision has been reached about its acquisition.

- 3. Will the railway be repaired for trains traveling from London to Kitchener?**

VIA Rail recently made an important investment to implement a centralized train control system on that section of the subdivision. Further upgrades are being assessed and will be pursued if the business case supports such investments.

- 4. Will the Quebec Bridge be able to support the train for a long time?**

The Québec Bridge is owned and maintained by CN, the infrastructure owner, and we have not been informed of any condition or situation that would affect VIA Rail services on this bridge.

- 5. VIA Rail invested \$10 million into the Newcastle Sub. Did that include investing in ribbon rail over the bolted rail that is currently in place?**

The investment in the Newcastle subdivision mainly targeted the replacement of railway ties and repairs to bridges and other structures. Replacement of bolted rails with continuous

welded rail was not part of the planned investment. The total investment by VIA Rail reached \$18 million.

- 6. Are there any plans to purchase further infrastructure, such as the Guelph Sub west of Kitchener, the remaining portion of the Chatham Sub, the Newcastle sub that was invested in by VIA Rail?**

VIA Rail continues to search and assess opportunities for acquiring additional infrastructure. Investments will be pursued if they are deemed beneficial and are supported by a business case.

Onboard Service

- 1. I don't know how to reach personnel if I need them during the night. Could you improve this service?**

This question refers to overnight trains. There is a night-duty employee on board all our long distance trains. They walk through the train in order to ensure security and service on board. There is a call button in your room which can be used to call an on-duty employee. An employee will come see you as soon as he or she is available. Note that there may be a slight delay if they are in the midst of performing safety checks.

- 2. Why is there not anyone to help get suitcases down from the storage in the cars?**

Checked baggage is brought to the train by station staff, whereas carry-on baggage is usually the responsibility of the passenger. As always, if you need additional assistance, our agents are happy to help once the aisles have been cleared of other passengers.

- 3. Lately the staff has not been putting the suitcase at the top of the steps. And the steps are very large for us older folks. Can there be two improvements to your service? One: add an easier set of stairs to climb up/down or a ramp? Two: Would you ask that our luggage be put up the steps so we can use our hands to climb?**

Baggage service, where employees place the bag at the top of the stairs, is offered in most locations. However, in stations that are currently being renovated we are working to improve our service offer and ease of travel. There are usually employees available to help, but it is not always possible to provide this service to all passengers. We apologize for the temporary inconvenience this may cause.

- 4. Is it possible to implement Wi-Fi on the *Canadian*?**

Yes, we are planning on implementing Wi-Fi on board the Canadian by 2018. However, given the limited access to cellular service on the route in certain remote areas, service may be limited.

- 5. Will VIA Rail be investing in less spotty Wi-Fi?**

Our Information Technology department continues to work with our service providers to improve the WiFi service. Coverage testing is on-going and some improvements have already been made, such as the placement of microcells in certain stations in order to strengthen the connection on board the train. Future improvements to other marginal cellular coverage areas are being planned.

- 6. When will data and video streaming be available on trains?**

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Due to bandwidth constraints and current cellular coverage reliability we are unable to offer a data and video streaming service because it would greatly constrict the WiFi experience for all. However, we do have an on train entertainment system in the Quebec city – Windsor corridor, which offers hundreds of hours of films, TV, news and more.

7. Is it possible to allow the use of debit and Visa cards on the trains, particularly the dining cars?

We are working with a new food and beverage supplier to introduce an agile onboard payment system by 2018.

8. Why have you reduced luggage allowances on long distance trains? Why have you discontinued baggage shipping services? Wouldn't that be additional revenue?

We have not changed our baggage policy on long distance trains since 2012, so more information is needed to answer your question. If you would like to send your question to customer_relations@viarail.ca we would be happy to follow up.

Regarding shipping, as a safety measure we no longer transport baggage without its owner.

9. Do the people who make decisions about customer services ever use the train or ask on board staff what they think?

When introducing a new product or service to our trains, we base our choices on customer demand, benchmarking and feedback from our employees. In general, we do a pilot of new onboard products or services before officially launching them. Riding the trains is also part of our tasks and objectives, especially when making decisions about onboard products or services.

10. Why don't you offer Business class service on trains going to the Maritimes?

The Sleeper Plus class of service is the long distance train's equivalent of Business class in the Corridor with all-inclusive meals and sleeping accommodations.

11. Why is there no way except for pressing the emergency button to get a crew member to give assistance?

This question refers to our long distance trains, as crew members are readily available in each car on shorter-distance trips.

On long distance trains, crew members are always available across the entire train to offer assistance when needed. During the safety briefing at the beginning of your trip the crew member assigned to your car will identify where he or she can be found on board. Crew members are also directed to periodically check in on all of their assigned rooms. Each room is equipped with a call button, which passenger can use when needed.

12. When will all VIA Rail trains between Vancouver – Toronto and Montreal- Halifax offer service in French?

All on board announcements on all trains are made in both official languages. As well, all onboard materials are bilingual (guest directories, menus, etc.). Almost all of the employees working on our trains are bilingual. There is always at least one bilingual crew member (usually there are more) on board to assist passengers in both official languages.

13. Are you considering upgrading the economy experience on the *Canadian*?

We have recently updated our food and beverage offer in Economy class. In addition, the equipment is upgraded on an on-going basis. We are always looking for ways to improve our service, and are currently reviewing the potential improvements to our Economy service.

Meals

1. Why did you ever stop offering those wonderful truffles in Business Class? When are you bringing them back?

The new chocolate selection was chosen, among other reasons, because the chocolates are individually wrapped which is more sanitary and because it is a high-quality Canadian product. At this time we have no plans to bring back the truffles.

2. Why are the wines offered on your train (for example the white wine), always poor quality?

In Business class, the wine selection process is quite rigorous. We have recently been through this process and have updated the wines in Business class as of May this year. The selection process involves an operational and financial analysis, followed by a blind taste test. We favour Canadian wines of different grape varieties that can be matched to our menus and meals on board.

3. I understand that the dining car is for clients who have booked cabins. Why could you not buy a dinner when you book your ticket for those traveling economy but want to have dinner?

Depending on the volume of passengers who have booked sleeper car accommodations (which includes meal service), economy passengers may be able to eat in our dining car. When loads are high, our dining car can only accommodate food and service for a maximum number of passengers. Therefore, we cannot pre-sell meals on a standard basis.

4. Why can't you manage the hot meals in economy better?

In order to properly address your question, more information is needed. We encourage you to get in touch with us at customer_relations@viarail.ca.

5. Is the travelling companion of a VIA Préférence Premier Member also entitled to early ordering of food in Business Class? We have noticed that some VIA staff honour this but others do not. What is the real policy?

VIA Preference Premier Members and their travelling companions registered under the same reservation number have priority for meal choice.

6. Will it ever be possible to pre-order a nut-free/allergy-free meal in Business class?

Food safety and the health of our passengers are of paramount importance to VIA Rail. Our food suppliers operate under the most stringent food safety regulations in the food service industry, and follow food safety control standards. However, due to the nature of the business, our food supplier cannot guarantee that their meals are free from traces of all allergens. The possibility of allergen introduction such as nuts, peanuts, fish, etc., exists at any stage of the supply-chain where food items come in contact with other food products. Due to these circumstances, we cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment onboard our trains. Following a rigorous benchmarking process among several transportation companies in North America, we confirm that VIA Rail is aligned with current practices in regards to allergen policy. We understand that specific measures may have to be taken in order to

accommodate passengers who suffer from allergies and we invite you to familiar yourself with our detailed allergen policy available on our web site: <http://www.viarail.ca/en/travel-information/special-needs/allergy>.

7. Have you considered Business class without a meal?

To maintain the integrity of our full-service Business class offer, each trip includes a full meal service. We are not planning to make changes to this offer.

8. Is it possible to offer a more detailed menu description so that we can make appropriate meal choices and know what we'll be receiving?

The full menu descriptions are available on the VIA Rail smartphone app, 24 hours prior to departure.

9. Is it possible to not always start the meal service from the front of the car and move toward to rear?

When there are two employees working in tandem, one will start at the front and one will start at the rear and move toward the center - "work to meet". When there is only one employee serving meals, they start at the back of the car and move forward, toward the kitchenette (galley), in order to be more efficient when refilling the cart. It is a standard practice in the passenger transport industry.

10. The last trip my wife and I made to Brantford, the Business class staff did not bring our food trays until after we left Woodstock, and we did not have time to eat our food before arriving in Brantford , so had to leave them uneaten . Why is food NOT available from Windsor?

Thank you for your feedback. The normal practice for this train is to serve the meals earlier in the trip. We apologize for the inconvenience this may have caused.

11. Why doesn't VIA Rail post a menu for the day outside the dining car each morning?

That is a fantastic idea and we are looking into implementing it!

12. Can you make sure the food is fresh on the Prince George – Prince Rupert route, as I bought a sandwich once and it was moldy? Can you offer more for food than just sandwiches and instant soup? Can you offer more healthy options?

Due to limited local suppliers and length of trip, we prioritize longer shelf-life items and selections that appeal to the broadest range of tastes. In rare situations such as the one you mentioned, we strongly encourage you to contact our customer relations department (customer_relations@viarail.ca), so that we can take corrective measures with our food and beverage supplier.

13. Why is the food so bad on train?

We make continuous efforts to offer meals that respond to our customers' needs and tastes, within the limitations of our on train galley. For instance, in the Quebec City-Windsor Corridor we update our menu approximately twice a year based on passenger and employee feedback. Being in close proximity to urban centers allows us to offer fresh and local products on these routes.

14. Why have the meals been reduced to cold plates? Can I pre order a hot meal?

This question refers to our trains running within the Quebec city – Windsor corridor. On the majority of these trains, lunch menus with one (1) cold and two (2) hot meal options are available. On our trains that operate in between mealtimes (mid-afternoon trains), two (2) cold meal options are offered, in response to passenger feedback. Special meals for people with dietary restrictions may be pre-ordered on any train, and these meals are always served hot.

- 15. In the Q&A at last year's Annual Public Meeting, you said, "We are planning to introduce the ability to pre-order meals in the not so distant future." Pre-ordering was possible in business class until October 2013. Why was it done away with? Why is it taking so long to restore it?**

We are looking at introducing the pre-ordering meal option this fall.

- 16. Will you consider updating your menu selections both in Business class and Economy to offer plant-based food options?**

We will be reviewing all our menu selection in fall and we will be considering a wider range of vegetarian (plant-based) options that meet the needs of a broader spectrum of our travelling public.

- 17. In Business class, can a choice of meals be offered for various diets, such as kosher, halal, vegetarian, etc?**

Yes, there are several special dietary meals available. They can be selected 48 hours before departure through either our web site or our call center. <http://www.viarail.ca/en/travel-info/special-needs/special-meals-and-medication>

- 18. Why did you switch from Red Rose tea bags to some other perfume brand?**

Red Rose tea is still readily available on the *Ocean* route. It was phased out at one point a couple years ago but quickly brought back due to customer demand. In addition to that, we also offer our wide range of Sloane Herbal teas.

- 19. Why do you not offer peppermint tea as one of the tea selection?**

We have recently added a mint tea option in Economy class.

Prestige class

- 1. It is my understanding that with the introduction of a Prestige class that people like myself (a Premier member) will be restricted to certain hours to travel in the dome of the Park car. Twice a year I ride the *Canadian* as a way of relaxing and I spend much of my time in the dome. I was very saddened by this decision by VIA Rail and would like to know why?**

Sleeper Plus passengers can continue to enjoy the dome space available in the Skyline Cars, in addition to the Park Car during open hours (2PM – 10PM). The access changes to this car were implemented in order to complete the Prestige experience. Note that our activity programming on board this train during peak season has been adjusted to focus on the Skyline cars.

- 2. Why not make the Prestige class available for a discount when occupancy is low?**

In fact, Prestige class is seasonally priced, meaning fares are lower in the spring and winter (off peak season) than in the summer (peak season).

Pets

1. Why can't I bring a pet with me anymore traveling from Montréal to Ottawa?

It is possible to bring a pet onto the train, when the train consist is equipped with a baggage car. However, because not all of our baggage cars are air-conditioned, we do not transport animals from June 1 – September 30, in order to avoid the possibility of exposing the animals extreme temperatures. There are a few trains with baggage cars running between Montréal and Ottawa. Look for the baggage icon next to the trains with baggage cars when searching online. If you want to be certain that your pet can travel with you on your scheduled departure date, it is best to call VIA Customer Care and speak with an agent.

2. Why are there absolutely no baggage cars between Ottawa and Toronto?

Due to the limited number of baggage cars, we prioritize their use for passengers connecting to and from long-distance trains, where we experience higher baggage volumes.

3. Why is there not a dedicated area for companion pets to travel with their owners?

Certified companion pets are allowed on board our trains. Depending on which train equipment you are travelling on, the location may vary. Please contact our call center when booking your travel plans.

On-Time Performance

1. What can be done to increase the on-time performance of the *Canadian*?

Why are the trains always late arriving to the final destination?

The main causes affecting the on-time performance of our trains in western Canada are related to railway traffic. In certain cases, weather conditions, maintenance on the rails, or obstructions can cause delays. In the Québec City – Windsor corridor, in addition to rail traffic, our punctuality can also be affected by operational problems specific to VIA Rail. Freight trains play an essential role in the Canadian economy, which is why we are working with the infrastructure owners to improve the efficiency and on-time performance of both services.

Over the last few years, we have revised our maintenance processes in order to allow a late-arriving train to be turned around faster and depart at the scheduled time. We are constantly re-evaluating our practices and procedures in order to ensure that our equipment is ready before each departure.

New Route Ideas

1. Can you explain your short and medium plans for expansion within the VIA Rail's Network? For example, do you have in mind to add any short haul routes to your network that connect urban areas, like Calgary-Edmonton ; Regina-Saskatoon ; Regina-Winnipeg? If not new, any possible re-launch of short haul, for example, the

Halifax-Sydney route?

Is there any talk of future lines opening up, in Newfoundland or elsewhere?

Is VIA Rail Canada considering expanding its role as a prime mover of people in our nation? In addition to being a major player in connecting Canadian cities, will VIA Rail consider providing rail service in such areas as the Vancouver to Whistler corridor (Sea to Sky)?

Does the resurrection of the Havelock Sub depend on government or private funding? Does VIA Rail have sufficient equipment to operate this route?

Do you have any plans to create more train routes that are purely for tourists?

Why can't VIA Rail come to Sault Ste. Marie?

Will VIA Rail ever run between Vancouver / Surrey and Calgary again?

Is it possible that VIA Rail passenger trains will offer a service departing and arriving from Sherbrooke Québec?

Is there going to be an increase of rail service to the south shore?

What is the estimated cost to regional municipalities of the West Island and the VIA Rail timeline to build a VIA Rail Express Commuter station opposite the boarding platform of the AMT Beaconsfield Train Station and to schedule West Island commuter travel on weekdays during rush hours and on weekends for early dinner hour boarding and late night returns from the Bonaventure /Central Station of Downtown Montreal?

Will VIA Rail have station stops in little towns like did many years ago, like Broadview, Saskatchewan?

Is VIA Rail considering adding a train through Calgary and the Banff Corridor into BC?

Will Regina ever be part of the national passenger train network?

Thank you for your questions. At this time there are no plans to change our travel routes.

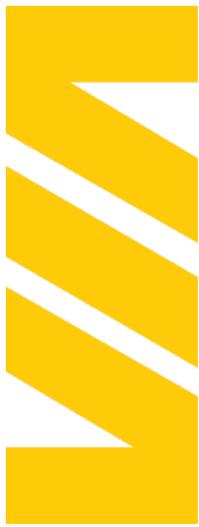
However, in late 2016, VIA Rail submitted proposals for both a new train fleet and a High Frequency Rail project with the Government of Canada. In 2016 alone, we met with community leaders and groups from 240 communities to discuss or address issues on rail network improvements. We take our passengers' needs into consideration and appreciate the feedback we receive. Should they get funding, these projects would give VIA Rail the flexibility to create its own schedules and create new routes to better serve the public's needs.

Accessibility

1. Why is VIA Rail not at least 25% accessible for disabled travellers?

What provisions do you have for handicapped travellers?

Will VIA Rail guarantee that any and all new rolling stock that is purchased will be fully accessible, and that the disability community will be involved in ensuring new trains are, indeed fully accessible?



VIA Rail is proud to be Canada's only national passenger transportation service that is accessible to people with disabilities. It is committed to enhancing its accessibility and providing sustainable, reliable and accessible intercity travel for Canadians of all abilities. VIA Rail operates many types of trains, some dating back to the 1950s, and we have refurbished this equipment in order to accommodate the greatest number of disabled passengers, including those who can't be transferred to a seat. All VIA Rail trains include wheelchair one tie-down, an accessible washroom and special services are provided to those needing help. In cases where the person is able to transfer to a seat and the wheelchair can be stored, multiple travellers with a wheelchair can travel together.

Over the years, we have made substantial improvements to our trains, stations and front-line services to ensure Canadian passenger rail remains at the forefront of accessible transportation for travellers with mobility restrictions.

As part of VIA Rail's commitment, and taking into consideration the segment of Canadians with various disabilities, we have consulted various groups representing people with disabilities to better understand their needs. As a result, accessibility for multiple travellers using various mobility aids will be one of the key requirements of the new fleet (See section on Fleet Renewal for more information). Fleet renewal is required to maintain current levels of service and will improve the customer experience both in terms of sustainability and accessibility.

In the meantime, we are investing considerably to improve our stations. In 2016, work already began in the London, Sarnia, Ottawa and Kingston stations, which will bring us up to international accessibility standards.

VIA Rail is limited however, in its ability to make accessibility improvements at stations where we do not own the infrastructure in question.

2. Level boarding is much more convenient than climbing up a rail car's stairs. I know VIA Rail is creating a level platform at Ottawa Station, but is the company considering doing this at other key stations like London and Toronto Union?

VIA Rail continuously considers all opportunities that would enhance the experience of our travellers. Low level access platforms are the preferred choice of all the freight railways (who own 97% of the track on which VIA Rail operates) to ensure that their trains are clear of the platform as they pass the station at track speed. The only high level platforms can be found in stations that do not have freight through traffic (such as Québec City, Ottawa or Montreal Central Station). As London station has freight through traffic, there are no immediate plans for creating a level platform. Union Station is owned by the City of Toronto.

3. Would you please provide ASL interpreter?

Passengers who are hearing impaired may call the VIA Customer Centre to make a service request up to 48 hours before their departure date to ensure they receive special service while onboard. VIA Rail has a dedicated phone line for the hearing impaired (1 (800) 268-9503). VIA Rail is planning to include more visual displays in its new fleet so that travellers can see the information that is verbally communicated by the agents. However, VIA Rail is not specifically considering providing ASL interpreters at this time.

4. Why does your policy on accessibility fail to address the question of washrooms? I travelled on the *Canadian* five years ago and was amazed that there was no grab rail in the toilet in our cabin. The toilets on regular trains have grab rails, so why are they not in the individual toilets?

All washrooms on the *Canadian* are equipped with grab bars, except for the washroom in the cabin for one. Because of the size of this room there is no grab bar, however there is a ledge on the window, on the sink, and where the bed slides that act as grab bars.

- 5. Does VIA Rail plan to phase out staff in additional train stations? As a blind person, I assert this practice poses undue obstacles to safe travel for blind passengers such as me.**

VIA Rail is not planning to review staff levels at its stations at this time.

- 6. Do you have a wheelchair to transport a person to the dining room?**

On long-haul trains, a smaller mobility aid (“Washington” wheelchair) designated for on train use can be used to transport a traveller to the dining room.

- 7. How can my husband and I travel eastward or westward overnight without one of us needing to climb into a bunk?**

Our Prestige Sleeper class offers a five-star hotel service on rails. The spacious Prestige cabins have a double bed and a private washroom with shower. Our Economy class chairs also recline so no climbing is required.

- 8. Are you continuing to provide para transit vehicle service from cities with manned stations to the nearest unmanned station if and when I need to travel?**

Para transit is not required if the nearest unmanned station has a wheel chair lift. On-board personnel will operate the wheelchair lift. If the nearest unmanned station does not have a wheelchair lift, VIA Rail will arrange for transportation for the passenger to the closest station that is equipped with a wheelchair lift.

- 9. When on earth is the Toronto station going to be accessible for everyone?**

Assistance provided to people with disabilities and luggage handling is taken care of by Special Service Assistants, a position created a few years ago with focus on serving customers with special service requirements. Passengers wanting to be provided with accessibility services or requiring help with baggage handling may call the VIA Customer Centre up to 48 hours before their departure date, or present themselves at a manned station and ask any VIA Rail employee for assistance. Union Station in Toronto is owned by the City of Toronto for further details on their plans for the station.

Stations and Station Services

- 1. Why is there a shortage of porters and or carts at most train stations, Toronto, Kingston, Ottawa, London?**

In 2013 the “Porter” position was changed to “Station Service Attendant/Special Service Request Agents”, which increased the number of staff available to respond to Special Service Requests (including baggage assistance). To make a special service request, call the VIA Customer Centre before your trip to let them know you will require service in the station and the station staff will adjust accordingly. You can also ask any VIA Rail employee at a manned station for assistance and they will contact a SSA/SSR Agent to come assist you. While on board you can ask the Service Manager to contact the station and request assistance on arrival.

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We no longer have carts available at stations as they were a safety concern when in proximity to the tracks.

- 2. Given that there is no "roofed-in" area to walk the lengthy walk to one's assigned sleeping/ passenger cars at the Halifax VIA Rail station, why are there no umbrellas available for passengers on rainy days?**

Thank you for this suggestion. Many years ago we used to offer this service, but eventually stopped the practice. We are going to look into getting some umbrellas for customer use again.

- 3. Why do your parking meters on site (at the London VIA Rail station) require a license plate number to be entered to allow you to get a parking ticket?**

As the parking at VIA Rail's London station is not gated, entering the license plate allows us to determine who has paid and who has not.

- 4. Why have monthly parking rates increased 30% in one year at the Kingston station? Is this a plan to discourage frequent VIA customers (privilege member)?**

The monthly parking rates at Kingston station increased by \$5 (or 6.6%) from \$75 to \$80 to cover the standard annual cost increases (labour rates, material costs as well as contracted services like cleaning and snow removal).

- 5. Why can't VIA Rail do better in terms of the quality of the trains and the amenities in train stations?**

We are always upgrading our stations to better serve our passengers, especially in the Québec City-Windsor corridor. Recently we have been replacing old HVAC units, improving platform lighting with LED technology, upgrading and expanding parking, and upgrading washrooms. If you have a question about a specific station or station amenity, we encourage you to send more information to customer_relations@viarail.ca so we can respond with more detail.

- 6. As a member and a user of VIA Rail, does it always have to be Business or First Class passengers who have access to the Business Lounge?**

Access to the Business Lounge at Toronto, Ottawa, and Montréal is part of the full-service Business class offer, along with complimentary meal and drink service, and a higher baggage allowance.

- 7. When will VIA Rail add a business lounge at Windsor station?**

VIA Rail has no plans to construct a Business Lounge at Windsor Station. The idea was discussed when the current station was being designed, but was not retained due to low demand.

- 8. It would be very convenient to have a car rental service at stations (Sainte-Foy and Québec City) in the City of Québec. I would use the train more often to travel to Québec.**

In fact, Communauto car sharing services have been available at both these stations for several years, and there is also a self-serve Discount Car Rental Kiosk available at Sainte-Foy station.

9. When will the renovations be completed at Union Station? When will the public Baby Grand piano return so I can play it once again?

Toronto Union Station is owned by The City of Toronto, who is in charge of the renovations, scheduled to be completed in 2018. The piano was also provided by the City of Toronto.

10. Would it be possible to have a small waiting room and toilet at the Watrous station?

There are no plans to add a small waiting room and washroom to Watrous Station.

11. Is there any future plan to establish a VIA Rail hub/station within the city of Mississauga so that residents avoid travelling to Union Station to catch a VIA Rail train?

There are no plans to build a station in Mississauga. Depending on your direction of travel, you could board the train in Oakville and Aldershot to avoid travelling to Union Station.

12. I take the 9:18 a.m. from Kitchener-Waterloo to Toronto quite frequently. I want to know why the attendant at the Kitchener station doesn't always announce which car will be where in the configuration.

Station attendants are not provided with the train configuration in advance as depending on the day and time, the size of the train consist will fluctuate to better match the ridership and demand. For most trains, the Business class car (car 1) immediately follows the locomotive, and the economy class cars (starting at car 3 as there is no car 2) follow behind it in numerical order. At some stations there are sign posts showing approximately where the specific cars will stop. Typically the service manager and service attendants are on the platform to facilitate boarding and ensure that passengers go to the correct car.

13. Are you considering a re-opening of Brighton train station?

There are no plans to reopen the Brighton train station at this time.

14. The business lounge in the Toronto station is nice, however passengers have to walk a very long way to get to the train. Can you not make the experience more pleasant by creating a closer and more convenient way for Business class passengers to get to the train?

Although Toronto Union Station is owned by the City of Toronto, the Business lounge portion of the station is actually owned by VIA Rail, and cannot be moved. It was recently renovated in conjunction with Parks Canada, as it is considered a heritage space. Once the renovations to the station are complete, the path to your train should be more seamless.

15. Does VIA Rail management have it as their main mission to consider the opinions of their customers when making decisions about future stations?

We are continually seeking customer feedback through our customer satisfaction surveys to improve our services, which includes our stations. The feedback about stations is used to determine station investments and to upgrade our standards when renovating or building new installations. If you would like to make a specific suggestion for a future station, we encourage you to send more information to customer_relations@viarail.ca so we can respond with more detail.

16. Will the Kingston Station have a walkway /elevator or some updated system to get over to Track 2? Currently it is difficult for me to use VIA Rail if I have to use Track 2.

By the end of June, two new escalators as well as new Garaventa wheelchair lifts will be in service to make it easier to get over to track two.

17. Can you tell us about your station upgrade plans in Ottawa and in particular the new "level" access for passengers?

The Ottawa station renovation project consists of replacing the existing at-grade lateral platform adjacent to Track 1 with a new elevated platform, installing a new elevator linking the station concourse with the tunnel level, and installing new elevator linking the tunnel level with the exterior passenger platform between Track 3 and Track 4. More information can be found on p.19 of our Sustainable Mobility Report, found here: <http://www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail/governance-and-reports/sustainable-mobility-report>

Washrooms

18. How come there is not more maintenance for the washrooms?

Our washrooms are cleaned, safety-checked and tested on an ongoing basis. All washrooms are washed at minimum once a day, but more often multiple times a day. As well, safety inspections, testing, repairs and a more thorough cleaning are done on a weekly basis to all washrooms on all trains.

19. Why do you still have gender segregated washrooms?

Would VIA Rail be willing to change the symbols on all the washroom doors in trains to make them gender neutral?

Thank you we are looking into the possibility of making this change. In the meantime, we have a submitted a new Corridor train fleet project proposal (see the New Train Fleet section of this document for more information) and with the new fleet we anticipate changing our washroom signage to gender-neutral.

Miscellaneous

1. What are the future plans for VIA Rail?

The future of VIA Rail involves firstly, the replacement of its aging corridor fleet and secondly, the construction of a High Frequency Rail corridor between Québec City, Montréal, Ottawa, and Toronto. These two strategic initiatives can significantly change the company's relevance to the communities it serves, its financial performance and support service enhancements across its current network.

2. How do you see rail surviving in the 21st century, given the political and financial obstacles it faces?

Road congestion will continue to increase due to (1) limited road access while populations continue to migrate to urban centres and (2) the arrival of driverless cars. Canada's aging population will require accessible transportation while its younger generation will continue to grow the shared economy and its public transportation component, meaning rail will continue to be the most efficient way into cities. The linking of urban centres located within less than 600 km of each other will depend on highly efficient, accessible, frequent and reliable train services. In short, passenger rail services will thrive in the 21st century.

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3. Can one book the Rocky Mountaineer through VIA Rail?

No, you cannot book a trip on the Rocky Mountaineer through VIA Rail's website, as it is a private company not associated with VIA Rail.

4. Why do you persist in filling the front cars and leaving rear cars empty? If you are going to drag the cars along, why not spread your passengers instead of jamming everyone together?

Seats in our cars are assigned based on the passengers' origin and destination, however we are working to improve this situation for customer comfort.

5. Why are VIA Rail's load factors per route and per station not available on line?

We are looking into making on and off information available online. Stay tuned.

Please note that VIA Rail shares a fair amount of information with the public through its annual and quarterly reports, as well as its Sustainable Mobility Reports, which can be found here:

<http://www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail/governance-and-reports/annual-report>

<http://www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail/governance-and-reports/quarterly-reports>

<http://www.viarail.ca/en/about-via-rail/governance-and-reports/sustainable-mobility-report>

6. Is there a smoking area on the train?

There is no smoking allowed on the train.

7. When are you going to bring steam locomotives back?

VIA Rail has never run a steam locomotive, and we have no plans to bring them back.

8. Would it be possible for families travelling with young children have a train car just for them?

Because the number of families travelling at any one time is unpredictable, we cannot reserve an entire car for family travel.

9. Will you be offering "quiet cars" like Amtrak offers? No cell phones, adults only quiet zone cars for people who just want to travel with peace.

Thank you for the suggestion. We will consider quiet cars in the design of our new Corridor fleet.

10. Will you consider a fitness car?

Although this sounds like a great idea, in fact it would pose significant safety issues. It simply is not safe to have fitness equipment not designed for use on trains in our train cars. Removing cars for this purpose would also reduce capacity, and the cost to renovate these cars would be significant. It is not an idea we are considering at this time.

11. There are plenty of freight trains coming through this country and never a lot of passenger trains. Are we seeing a difference in travel within the next 10 years?

Changes to rail travel in the future will mostly be limited to increases in frequencies and reliability, and a decrease in trip times for trips below 600 km. That distance represents over 80% of intercity car trips. Accessibility for people with mobility challenges will also see significant improvements across the country's current network.

- 12. My family from Montréal were recently on the train to Toronto and met the President, Mr. Desjardins-Siciliano, who was going from car to car presenting himself and answering questions. My family were quite impressed and we are all encouraged that the head of the company is really in touch with VIA Rail travellers. My question is will this practice continue by the President and or others?**

The current President and CEO of VIA Rail prides himself in being accessible to passengers, employees and all parties interested in passenger rail. His candour reflects his belief that everyone is entitled the respect of being heard, considered and answered. Since his appointment in May 2014, he has met over 5,000 passengers on trains. He travels across the country every 10-12 weeks to meet with the company's employees and local stakeholders. He intends to maintain this approach during his tenure, as he believes those conversations have led to greater employee engagement, higher customer satisfaction and significant service improvements.

- 13. Do you ever run contests for First Nations youth to travel across Canada and win a VIA Rail trip?**

There is a [discount available to Indigenous Persons](#) year-round. When we do have contests, they are not targeted toward any one group, but are open to all individuals.

- 14. Is one ever allowed to ride in the locomotive even if it requires signing a release form in order to do so?**

It is against safety rules to allow anyone to ride in the locomotive.

- 15. Any chance of reviving CN's former Car-Go-Rail feature?**

VIA Rail has never offered this service, and has no plans to do so in the future.

- 16. When is VIA Rail going to offer a service to allow us to take our bicycles on board - from Ottawa to anywhere?**

Bicycles can be transported on trains with baggage cars which are equipped with bike racks. Unfortunately we have no plans to add a baggage car to any train to or from Ottawa. Foldable bikes are accepted on board and can be stored in the baggage towers. Our future Corridor fleet will accommodate bikes.

- 17. Why can I not place my motorcycle aboard a designated cargo car?**

VIA Rail does not carry vehicles that have gasoline tanks. The Sudbury – White River route is an exception as the baggage car is equipped with a vented gasoline storage cabinet that allows us to carry quads.

- 18. I would like to know how a person can get a job as a General Labourer with VIA Rail, in Terrace area.**

Thank you for your interest in VIA Rail. Please consult the [Careers page](#) on our website for employment opportunities.

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- A large yellow graphic element on the left side of the page, consisting of a vertical bar with a stylized 'S' shape cut out of it, creating a zig-zag pattern.
- 19. The address of Saint-Lambert station is very misleading. There is no access from St. Denis Street and there has been none for years. Can you please change it to a number on Victoria Street?**

The civic address of our station is determined by the municipality in which the station is located, not by VIA Rail. As a result of your suggestion, we will contact the City to determine whether it can be implemented. Thank you.

- 20. What will VIA Rail do to ensure that locations of its stations are correctly shown on the VIA Rail website station maps?**

The maps of our stations that appear on our website are generated by Google based on the latitude and longitude of the station. If you notice that a station's location is displayed incorrectly, please contact webmaster@viarail.ca so we can manually correct it.

- 21. Why don't you have clearly stated and enforced rules for passenger etiquette?**

As part of VIA Rail's **Traveling Better Together** policy we provide directives to our passengers on board all trains through the boarding announcement. In addition, on board our long haul trains this information is also found in our guest directories.

- 22. What tools and methods does VIA Rail employ to manage their processes and despite the large number of factors that can affect a travel experience and outcome, still provide a high-quality, high-value and, most importantly, predictable experience for its customers, and how do these same tools and methods assist VIA Rail in its continuous improvement journey?**

Two and a half years ago, the company appointed a Chief Business Transformation Officer, Ms. Sonia Corriveau. Under her able leadership, VIA Rail prioritized the deployment of customer-facing applications. A project management office was implemented with the discipline and processes required to deliver both small and large-scale capital projects. Passenger rail is a capital-intensive business. Project management discipline is paramount.

- 23. Why do I have to show my veterans card every time I buy train tickets? I understand that I need to show it to receive the discount but why not add a comment to my account?**

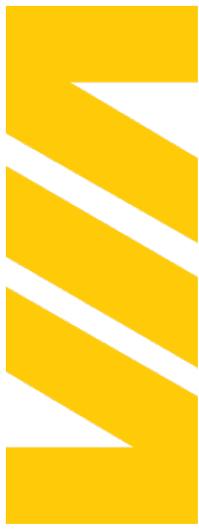
In order to ensure that the person picking up and using the ticket is the person who is entitled to the discount, the veterans' card must be shown, in person, when tickets are purchased. This cannot be verified through an online profile.

- 24. Bedbugs do not discriminate socio-economically and can be found wherever there is material. Are trains cars regularly subject to extermination?**

It's very rare that our train cars have bedbugs, but should any bedbugs be found, the cars are pulled from service and properly treated.

- 25. With a couple of locomotives how many cars can be pulled?**

With VIA Rail's HEP 2 fleet (stainless steel cars), two locomotives can pull 30 cars in the summer and 24 cars in the winter. The limitation is not related to the tractive effort of the



locomotives but on braking capacity of the fleet in the summer and electrical capacity of the onboard genset (due to the heating demand) in the winter.

26. How is VIA Rail protecting its passengers from terrorist like threats? What precautions are in place to ensure our safety? Will VIA Rail employ X-ray technology for luggage or metal detectors for passengers proline to boarding, in doing so, have similar security measures as air travel?

VIA Rail places a high priority on the safety and security of its passengers, employees and operations. Safety and security are engrained in the company culture, and permeate everything we do every day. Passenger train services and air travel have very different environments. We have many different security strategies that we deploy, including but not limited to, intelligence gathering, surveillance and canine patrols. We don't share our plans and strategies with the public for security reasons.

27. It appears as if you are now starting an armed railway police department, where are you at with that process? Are your officers now trained and sworn in under the railway safety act and actively patrolling your properties?

VIA Rail does have constables trained and sworn under the *Railway Safety Act*. Unfortunately we cannot share more detailed information publicly for security reasons. VIA Rail is continuously developing and deploying security strategies and resources as required. We also have important partnerships with organizations across the country that act on our behalf.

28. Is VIA Rail planning to actively participate in the 100th Anniversary of the Halifax Explosion? e.g., by commemorating the courage of the station master at the Bedford station who signalled the incoming eastbound train and saved hundreds of lives?

Thank you for the suggestion. We would be honored to take part in any commemorative ceremony that may be organized by the community. We will follow up accordingly.

29. Is there a unique event VIA Rail is doing to celebrate Canada's 150th Birthday (other than special rates, etc.)?

To celebrate our country's 150th birthday, VIA Rail wrapped a portion of its fleet in the Canada 150 colours. 22 locomotives, 18 passenger cars and the Glen Fraser lounge car were decorated with the names of some of the cities that VIA Rail serves.

While there is no one unique event VIA Rail doing to celebrate Canada 150, as Canada's national passenger rail carrier, VIA Rail has been participating in a number of major initiatives throughout the year organized by several partners across Canada. These projects and events were selected based on their ability to bring Canadians together, promote our culture, and foster diversity and include 10 Heritage Canada signature events. Altogether, VIA Rail's support of these projects represent an investment of over \$1.6 million in train tickets.

30. While I really enjoy my travel on VIA Rail at my age I find it very frustrating having to exit a VIA Rail train at Union Station in Toronto only to re-board again on the same train – often the same car and sometimes just a seat or two away from your previous location. Why can one not remain on board?

Unless there is an operational issue (change of equipment, major cleaning needed) all passengers connecting to another train that uses the same equipment as their previous train are always welcome to stay on board. If they are asked to detrain for an operational issue, once the servicing of the equipment is completed, they can then proceed to their seat or car

for their next departure. The Service Manager will also make an announcement to this effect prior to arrival.

31. In general, is VIA Rail open to partnering with the scientific community on a series of citizen science-driven strategic initiatives aimed at closing the data gaps in climate change response, water governance, human rights and economic development policy?

VIA Rail is open to many partnership opportunities. We invite you to send in your proposal through our [online form](#).