



Fall 2012

VIA Rail Canada's Summary of Actions to improve safety at Crossings

PROJECT

Safety Improvement at Railway Crossings. Safety at grade crossings is a primary focus of VIA Rail. Every year in Canada approximately 300 collisions and trespassing incidents occur at highway/railway crossings resulting in a death or serious injury.

OBJECTIVE

To improve safety for VIA's operations and the general public at railway / roadway crossings including crossing closures, improvements, alternate access and other initiatives.

BUDGET

\$40.4 million since 2009 (not including the payment by Transport Canada to land owners and/or farmers for each closing).

DESCRIPTION

VIA is committed to maintaining the highest possible standards to ensure the comfort and safety of passengers, employees and the general public.

VIA Rail's Initiatives

- In 2011, **55 private crossings** were closed on the route between Ottawa – Montreal and **4** on the Chatham subdivision for a total of 59 closings.
- In 2012, **five** requests for closure have been forwarded to Transport Canada for the section of track owned by VIA. This initiative to improve safety has been made possible through Transport Canada's Grade Crossing Closure program.
- In the Kingston subdivision, owned by CN, there were **7 closings** and **68 safety improvements** made by VIA Rail during the years 2009 to 2012.
- In the Brockville subdivision, owned by CP, there were **26 improvements** made in 2010 to 2011 through increased signage and level crossing protection upgrades.
- On the VIA-owned Smiths Falls and Chatham Subdivisions, improvements at **35 crossings** were completed in 2011. The investment totalled \$4.5M and included significant upgrades to level crossing automatic warning devices at both public and private crossings.
- In 2011, visibility was improved for road users by replacing the incandescent unit lights by brighter LED units on **47 crossings** on the Alexandria Subdivision for an investment of \$240K funded by a Transport Canada crossing improvement program.

- In 2013 and 2014, in the subdivision of Guelph the projected number of safety improvements is 73.
- Following the completion of detailed safety assessments at all crossings, VIA Rail has invested \$40.4 million in crossing safety: \$9.4M on the GEXR Guelph Sub, \$6.5M on the CP Brockville Sub, \$20M on the CN Kingston Sub, \$1.7M on the VIA Smiths Falls Sub and \$2.8M on the VIA Chatham Sub.
- VIA Rail partnered with communities for Operation Life Saver initiatives such as Belleville Children Safety Village and Rail Safety Days.
- In 2011 the Railway Association of Canada Safety Award was presented to VIA for its Crossing Closure Program, which was developed to introduce the Transport Canada Grade Crossing Closure program to owners of crossings on our three subdivisions (Alexandria, Smiths Falls, and Chatham). The method consisted of a one-on-one personal approach, which enabled parties to exchange on the use of crossings, VIA's operations, regulations and safe practices. This effort promoted a friendly atmosphere, where logic and common understanding prevailed and led to a very high rate of success in closing crossings. 59 crossings are now non-operational.
- VIA Rail won a 2012 Railway Association of Canada Safety Award for its conference on high-risk railway crossing awareness. VIA organized an event in Kingston, to raise awareness and promote prevention. Among the people in attendance were stakeholders from the provinces of Québec and Ontario including municipal/provincial police forces, Transport Canada, Coroners and the Chief Coroner of Québec, Operation Lifesaver, and Teamsters Canada Rail Conference (TCRC).