

**“This Train Means Business”:  
PROGRESS REPORT No. 1 OF THE SHINING WATERS RAILWAY**



On January 11, 2011, an information session was held to update the public on the work that has been achieved and the tasks underway to bring the passenger train to Peterborough. The following is a synopsis of the report that was made. The entire report can be procured from the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce or the office Dean Del Mastro, MP.

**The Background:**

A plan has evolved to incorporate the Shining Waters Railway (SWR) as the locally owned and managed vehicle to restore passenger and improve freight service from Toronto to Peterborough, Havelock, Blue Mountain, Perth and Smiths Falls.

The SWR plan is supported by a Government of Canada capital commitment of \$150 million and an equal amount from the Government of Ontario, for a total of \$300 million. Key supporters include:

- five federal Cabinet Ministers,
- four Members of Parliament,
- every municipality along the route,
- the Eastern Ontario Wardens,
- the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce,
- the Greater Peterborough Economic Development Corporation and
- the CPR.

The SWR will be a locally governed railway owner and manager, but not an operator. All passenger and freight services, as well as track maintenance, will be provided under contract by experienced railway providers.

**Key to all aspects of the SWR plan will be:**

- The transfer by charitable donation of 107.2 miles of main track, spurs, sidings, structures and all land owned by the CPR, consisting principally of the Havelock Subdivision (Mile 90.78-178.0) and the Nepton Subdivision (Mile 0.0-20.0).
- Rehabilitation of the Havelock Subdivision from Peterborough George Street to the CPR's Toronto Yard (Mile 117.97-178.0) to Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Class 4 standards for operation at a maximum permissible track speed of 80 mph for passenger trains and 60 mph for freight trains.
- Upgrading of the remainder of the Havelock Subdivision (Mile 90.78-117.97) and the Nepton Subdivision (Mile 0.0-20.0) to FRA Class 2 for freight operation up to 25 mph.

**Focusing on the Passenger Service:**

The line will continue to service freight travel. However, SWR passenger service will be operated from Peterborough George Street to Toronto Union Station, a distance of 76.5 miles, making use of the SWR's Havelock Subdivision plus trackage rights on the CPR Belleville Subdivision and GO Transit's ex-CPR Don Branch to the Union Station Rail Corridor.

SWR passenger operations will be contracted to an experienced third-party rail service provider using SWR-owned rolling stock. Service frequency is expected to consist of two morning westbound/afternoon eastbound frequencies geared primarily to commuter needs from Monday through Friday. The service plan will include at least one return frequency on Saturdays, Sundays and statutory holidays. A 90-minute running time from Peterborough to Toronto is projected and the passenger station stops will be:

- Peterborough George Street;
- Peterborough Harper Road;
- Pontypool;
- Myrtle;
- Claremont;
- Locust Hill;
- Steeles Avenue East; and
- Toronto Union Station.

### **The Stations and Access Stops:**

- The Peterborough George Street site is owned and occupied by the Greater Peterborough Chamber of Commerce and the Harper Road site is owned by the City of Peterborough.
- Toronto Union Station is jointly owned by the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario. The other station sites will occupy land currently owned by the CPR.
- Except for the Chamber of Commerce's former CPR Peterborough station and Toronto Union Station, all locations will require new shelters and platforms.
- The communities have indicated a willingness to provide basic support, such as snow clearing and grounds maintenance.

### **The Numbers We May Anticipate:**

The following numbers are based on the 2010 Metrolinx study.

- daily ridership of 950 passengers in each direction is projected within one year of start-up, rising to 1,500 over 15 years.
- Based on information obtained from VIA, it is anticipated the passenger service will be self-supporting. Ridership, revenue and operating costs will be tested further as part of the business plan.
- Completion of the full plan, including the restoration of Peterborough-Toronto passenger service, is projected for the third quarter of 2014.

### **Economic Impacts:**

There are numerous working examples of community-owned or -managed rail projects throughout North America. The benefits they have brought to their regions include:

- diversion of traffic from other publicly supported modes of transportation;
- job creation during the construction or equipment manufacturing phases;
- ongoing jobs and economic spin-off from the operation;
- savings in health care costs due to diversion of traffic from less safe modes and reductions in emissions that affect the public's health;
- savings in national energy costs, given the higher energy efficiency and reduced fuel requirements of rail; and
- residential and/or commercial development and economic activity in the areas surrounding the stations and other facilities

### **Other Success Stories:**

Three short lines of interest to the SWR are municipally owned and operated under contract by experienced short line railway companies. These are:

- Orangeville-Brampton Railway (OBRY);
- Barrie-Collingwood Railway (BCRY); and
- Guelph Junction Railway (GJR).

All three were formed by the municipalities because of the economic damage that would have been done to their employment and tax bases had the lines been abandoned. In all three cases, the municipalities aimed to not just support existing industries, but to attract new ones dependent on rail transportation for inbound and/or outbound shipments. Additionally, two of these short lines have supported specialized tourist and dinner train operations benefitting many other businesses within their communities.

### **What the Service Could Look Like:**

As was demonstrated in the past, the Peterborough-Toronto service is a “multi-tasker” and it is anticipated the SWR passenger service will be:

- a weekday morning-in/afternoon-out commuter service;
- a stand-alone, regional intercity service;
- a feeder to the VIA national and GO regional networks;
- a tourism generator; and
- a link for air travellers when GO’s Union-Pearson Airport Rail Link opens in 2015.

### **Next Steps**

- Finalize the incorporation of the SWR
- File for charitable status
- Complete economic impact study
- Complete five-year financial plan
- Hire engineering firm and receive detailed work plan and refined estimates
- Memorandum of Understanding from the CPR
- Fair market value report from the CPR
- Transport Canada agreement covering transfer of CPR assets to SWR
- Negotiate freight revenue sharing agreement with the CPR
- Tender capital projects
- Commence infrastructure reconstruction in April 2010
- Completion of full project and re-launch of passenger service on July 1, 2014

For more information about our InfoNotes contact  
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