

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 2016

23/01/2016 *Ottawa Citizen* *Otrain*

There hadn't been a report of the Trillium Line O-Train going through a signal in 14 years. That streak ended on Nov. 18, 2015.

Council and the transit commission learned Friday that Transport Canada flagged two instances of a train going through signals in the last two months of the year.

There was no damage and no one was hurt, but now the city has to explain to the federal agency what it will do to reduce the hazards.

In the November incident, a train stopped past a signal located before the crossroads of the Trillium Line and the Via Rail line.

Then, on Dec. 24, a train stopped beyond a signal at the passing track near Gladstone Avenue.

According to a memo sent by city manager Kent Kirkpatrick, staff notified rail authorities. The "railway systems performed as intended," he says.

The federal inspector, in a letter to the city, cited the "frequency of emergency brake application events" affecting train operators and "compromising safe operating practices."

The city spent \$60 million on an upgrade of the Trillium Line. The expansion, which launched last March, included new trains and improvements to the signal system.

27/02/2016 *Ottawa Citizen* *Smiths Falls* *Fallowfield Road*

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The city will study grade-separated rail crossings at five locations in Nepean, city manager Kent Kirkpatrick confirmed this week in a letter to the Transportation Safety Board.

It comes within the 90-day timeline for response set by the TSB last December when it released its final report on the investigation of the Sept. 18, 2013, collision between an OC Transpo double-decker bus and Via passenger train that killed six and injured dozens.

In partnership with Via, the city will study the feasibility of grade separation at the level crossings at Woodroffe Avenue, Fallowfield Road and the Transitway, where the bus-train crash occurred.

The city will also look at the Merivale Road and Jockvale Road level crossings to have a complete understanding of all remaining level crossings in this part of Ottawa, Kirkpatrick wrote.

Level crossings at Greenbank Road, where construction of a new underpass is underway, and Strandherd Road, where grade separation is planned for construction between 2020 and 2025, will not be subject to the feasibility study, the city says.

The studies will include a review of all previous work related to these crossings, an analysis of current and projected traffic data, geotechnical work where required, recommendation on whether these crossings could be improved by an underpass or overpass, financial estimates for any feasible works and any recommendations that could enhance safety at the crossings in the interim. The city says it won't do public consultation because of the technical nature of the study, but it may seek input from the National Capital Commission given it owns land near the study area. The results of the studies and any recommendations for action will be presented to the transportation committee and city council next year.

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07/09/2016 *Eastern Ontario Review* *Montreal and Ottawa*

VIA Rail ownership of land puts recreational trail at risk, says Warden

One of the issues, they says, is that VIA Rail owns the land the trail is on. Quote via can give us a 20-year lease, quote he said, quote but there's a condition in there that if tomorrow morning they need it, we're out. Unquote he said that makes it difficult to justify spending money Paving the trail on making other improvements. Quote are you going to gamble all this money unquote he said.

A window into the 1870s is unearthed

A planned excavation of an old railway site has begun to yield some exciting results. The archaeology firm working next to the City Centre building by Bayview Station set off on a dig not knowing what to expect from their efforts. However, they have discovered the well-preserved foundation ruins of the original 1871 turntable and engine house, which is a marvel to see. A window into the 1870s, this stone, brick, wood and iron discovery dates back to the birth of the neighbourhoods surrounding the site. Hintonburg, Mechanicsville, Bayswater and the Preston areas owe their early development to the establishment of the railroads in the area. The rail workers purchased small builder lots, built modest wood homes nearby, and toiled in difficult and often harsh working conditions at the rail yard. You can almost picture these Kitchissippi pioneers working on this site, in what was then strictly an industrial area.

The excavations have been performed at two different sites. One is the original 1871 turntable, which was used to move train engines into service or storage bays, or to simply turn them around for their return journey. The turntable was located next to a small rectangular engine house, which was destroyed by fire in 1883.

A new, larger turntable and roundhouse was constructed in late 1883 slightly to the west, and part of this roundhouse too has been exposed by the archaeologists. The stone circumference surrounds a number of individual bays, constructed of neatly laid brick, where the engines could be serviced from underneath.

What is most impressive is how well both sites are preserved. It is not just a pile of old rubble in the formation of an old industrial structure. Many features are still as evident as the day they were covered up. The researchers did not have to dig far either – the structures were located only a foot or two down.

The 1883 roundhouse was destroyed by fire in 1910. This is significant because a new roundhouse had to be built. The CP Railway decided to build a much larger roundhouse and expand their yard to the west so they purchased all the houses in the neighbouring subdivision off of Bayview Road (on what was called Alonzo Street), tore them down, and built the new roundhouse which opened in the Spring of 1911. This is on the location of what is now the Tom Brown Arena. (The 1911 roundhouse was demolished in 1968, and Tom Brown was built in 1977). Had it not been for the fire of the 1883 roundhouse, it is likely that Alonzo Street and its houses would still stand today on this spot!

The future of this archaeological find of local history is cloudy. At present, there are no plans to preserve the unearthed turntable and there is no requirement on the part of the developer, Trinity, to do so. It would be wonderful if this important piece of local railway history could be preserved in some way – either as a feature of the new condo building itself or in its courtyard. Steam railroads and their importance have become a thing of the deep past; having an authentic exhibit such as this would be an incredible educational piece. It would be an ideal monument, especially for those of us with deep family ties to the workers who spent their hard-working days on this site and helped build Hintonburg and Mechanicsville so many years ago.