

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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09/03/2016 Kingstonist Kingston, Portsmouth and Cataraq Kingston

Ticket to ride! Pictured above is a Kingston, Portsmouth and Cataraqui Electric Railway Company fare ticket to ride public transit in Kingston between the hours of 8:30am and 10:30pm. The company was in existence from 1895 until March of 1930 when a disastrous fire wiped out the fleet save one lone car (according to the Ottawa papers). It was reported yesterday that the Big Dig 2016 unearthed some streetcar tracks on Princess street. Perhaps it is from this company's lines?

23/07/2016 Ottawa Citizen Belleville Smiths Falls

Rail travel disrupted as freight train derailed at Smiths Falls

A freight train derailment at Smiths Falls has thrown a monkey wrench into summer weekend travel plans for Via Rail passengers.

A Via spokeswoman said a CP Rail train derailed around the supper hour Friday, bringing traffic in both directions between Ottawa and Brockville to a halt. CP said the train derailed between Carroll Road and Highway 15 at about 5:15 p.m. It said there were no injuries and no public safety issues, and that teams had been dispatched to assess the site and begin cleanup operations.

The OPP tweeted about the derailment Friday night, saying that those in the Smiths Falls area may see a derailed train, but they also said there was no threat to public safety.

It wasn't immediately known when the tracks would be cleared, but service was up and running as normal by 7 a.m. Saturday morning, according to a tweet from their official account.

Friday night, the company sent an email to passengers booked on trains and was looking at alternative means of transportation, which typically takes the form of buses.

Via Rail could not immediately say how many trains and passengers were affected.

Note

An empty CP ballast train from the Belleville Subdivision was entering the yard at Smiths Falls from the west end, and taking a crossover from the south track to the north track and into the yard when new SD30C-ECO 5027 split a switch and went on the ground. There were 4 units on the train, CP 5027 was the 2nd unit. They were able to use a leading unit to head out the next crossover and pull the tail end back, but the CP 5027 prevented any movements until moved.

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.