

Local Railway Items from Area Papers - 2021

13/01/2021 Cornwall Freeholder Cornwall Street Cornwall

Cornwall to Review Costs of Moving Locomotive Number 17 Within 2021 Budget

Cornwall Ontario - The future of locomotive number 17 took another turn towards a conclusion on Monday.

For the most part, council is in favour of a motion presented by Coun. Elaine MacDonald, which asks administration to create a report shedding light on the locomotive's history as well as the overall cost of moving it to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

The railway museum has twice expressed its interest in acquiring Cornwall's locomotive 17.

A museum official said last month that if the museum was to receive the engine, it would be preserved and stabilized, but not restored to working order.

In addition, he also shared the museum was not currently financially capable of transporting the locomotive.

If the museum is to receive it, someone else would have to cover the transportation bill.

MacDonald, who has expressed her willingness to donate the locomotive to the museum, was hopeful the requested report could be received prior to 2021 budget discussions coming to and end.

It wouldn't be included in the first draft of the budget, as Coun. Justin Towndale tweeted Wednesday the draft budget is now in council members' hands.

"I think that this issue is something that has plagued us for years, and I think that it's time that we move because unfortunately, although we can delay, the locomotive is suffering the effects of time and it is decaying before our eyes," MacDonald said on Monday.

"Although we pay lip service to the value of our industrial heritage, we have never demonstrated the will to actually act out on it and right now."

Coun. Syd Gardiner said perhaps the land on which the locomotive sits on, on the corner of Ninth Street and Brookdale Avenue, could be sold to a local business owner who needs parking space.

"That was the other reason why I wanted it out of there," he said.

Administration however made it clear that having a report ready by 25 Jan 2021, Cornwall city council's next meeting, would be unlikely.

Instead, the report will be presented to council during budget deliberations which are set to begin in February.

That, sat well with three councillors who voted against MacDonald's motion, Couns. Dean Hollingsworth, Towndale, and Maurice Dupelle.

"I am not a real champion of getting rid of any heritage," said Hollingsworth.

"Let's face it, the old cliché was that if you wanted to get rid of a building in Cornwall, just put a heritage designation on it. We've gotten rid of enough as it is. I'd rather pursue other avenues."

Towndale on the other hand outlined he fully intends, during budget time, on debating why the city should keep the locomotive.

"This locomotive happens to be on the register of the Ontario Heritage Trust and it happens to be one of only two properties in the entire city on it, the other being the Cornwall Public Library," he said.

"I find it interesting that in 2006 I believe, the city thought enough of the locomotive to voluntarily name it to the list of the register and yet now we're thinking of getting rid of it.

"Maybe now we'll have one location that is designated throughout the city."

The city set aside \$100,000 in 2017 to cover a portion of any restoration and moving costs, which was acknowledged to be insufficient to complete the work.

Council is having this discussion again because during a review in December of reserve funds, Coun. Eric Bergeron asked why that amount was still sitting unused and that it be tabled as part of budget discussions.

04/02/2021 Cornwall Freeholder Cornwall Street

Cornwall council bids farewell to Locomotive No. 17

Cornwall's Locomotive No. 17 will not be staying in the city.

Coun. Elaine MacDonald's motion to have the behemoth transported to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls - at the City of Cornwall's expense - narrowly passed 6-5 on Tuesday.

The museum had reached out to the city last year, expressing its interest in acquiring the locomotive if Cornwall council did not wish to keep it.

Bill de Wit, the city's division manager for municipal works, told council that moving the locomotive will more than likely cost about \$50,000.

That amount was provided to de Wit from a moving company representative.

"The problem is of course that it is an oversized unit and it weighs 75 tons," he said. "It will take a crane to put it up on a low flat-bed truck."

de Wit also told council the locomotive being as high as it is, does not meet Ministry of Transportation specifications for height. A police escort would therefore be needed to move the locomotive, as well as the lifting of wires along the way. According to him, a survey undertaken by the city a few years back showed that the majority of residents polled supported having the locomotive moved to Lamoureux Park - specifically at the corner of Newsy Lalonde Way and Water Street.

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"There were a lot of issues that came about," he said. "There were concerns about security to which we said we could bring electricity for lights.

That added cost. Then there were issues about liability, so then there was discussion about putting up a fence. Then there was also accessibility."

The issue of what to do with the locomotive sharply divided council, with some councillors saying getting rid of it would be akin to erasing another piece of Cornwall's history.

"When you keep getting rid of these historical reference points, you lose some of your history," said Coun. Dean Hollingsworth. "The Capital Theatre only rests in the minds of us who are still young enough who remember going there. If you talk to someone under the age of 45, they have no concept of what we are talking about.

"I am not prepared to give it away."

Others, such as MacDonald and Coun. Syd Gardiner argued there was insufficient support from local groups who wished to save the locomotive.

"It's come to a point where no one is doing anything about it," said Gardiner. "It's just been sitting there and rotting for the past 15 years and nothing has been done about it."

Coun. Justin Towndale said he had been in contact with an SDG resident who offered to restore the locomotive for about \$100,000. The man in question, according to Towndale, specializes in antique car restoration and wanted to keep the locomotive in Cornwall.

de Wit, along with Mark Boileau, the city's general manager of planning, development and recreation, confirmed much of the land on which the locomotive sits is owned by the city and could subsequently be sold.

Cornwall Mayor Bernadette Clement voted against MacDonald's motion, saying she couldn't vote for getting rid of the locomotive and having to pay \$50,000 to do so.

VIA Rail Collision

Cornwall Ontario - Traffic is closed from Vincent Massey to Power Dam as of 16:41.

The single car collision involved the car and a VIA Rail train.

It was reported that because the train hit the vehicle towards the rear the driver survived the collision.

A helicopter was reported to be unavailable so the driver was transported to Hospital in Ottawa via ambulance.

20/02/2021 Cornwall Freeholder Cornwall Street

Locomotive Number 17's Next Stop Should be Benson Centre

Cornwall Ontario - Keep locomotive number 17 local, and off any express route out of Cornwall.

That's the message being delivered loud and clear by some of the city's leading heritage experts, in a detailed letter this week to the mayor, council, and city, titled "Engine 17: A Sad Story of Neglect".

In the letter, prepared by Wes Libbey, the group says the Benson Centre is the "perfect location to set up a "Cornwall: Industrial and Innovation Past" interactive centre.

There is a lot of down time for parents and families between games and while the children are practicing, an interactive display will offer them a new place to go and learn about Cornwall.

"Engine 17 worked in the Domtar yard (near the Benson Centre location)," reads the letter.

"It is time to bring it home!"

Earlier this month, Cornwall council decided locomotive 17 will be making tracks, a 6-5 vote on a motion to have it transported to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

City staff told council that moving the engine to its next stop will cost about \$50,000.

But historians want to derail that plan, and in a five page treatise delivered to city leaders, Libbey and others wrote that the city should locate engine 17 "as the focal point to highlight our industrial history", and that the location should be the community hub that is the Benson Centre, "it's the busiest location in Cornwall, attracting over 100,000 people every year. It is a place where all age groups meet. The Cornwall Street Railway (CSR) story, Cornwall's economic story, needs to be told, and it cannot be contained on a plaque," reads the letter.

Contributors to the letter were Lily Worrall, president of the SD&G Historical Society, Jean-Yves Lemoine, senior curator Cornwall Community Museum, Chris Granger, former member Heritage-Patrimoine Cornwall, and Carole Libbey treasurer Heritage-Patrimoine Cornwall.

They say in the first section of the letter, "Engine 17: Why It Matters, that Cornwall owes its success in no small way to the (CSR)."

The letter is rich in historical detail and details economic activity in the city going back to the early 19th century, contributors say Cornwall was an industrial and innovation beacon in the late 1880s, that "people, inventors, and investors travelled from far and wide to visit (Cornwall), the cradle of technology in Canada. Yet we basically have nothing remaining of that era. All factories have been demolished or transformed into condominiums and stores. The visual past has almost been erased from memory."

The group says "an interactive display with Locomotive 17 at its centre will rekindle curiosity, improve and preserve the knowledge of our industrial and innovative past."

To save Locomotive 17, the contributors say, council must vote against the repeal of the historic designation.

Earlier this month it was reported that the museum had reached out to the city last year, expressing its interest in acquiring the locomotive if Cornwall council did not wish to keep it.

And in a survey conducted by the city several years ago, a majority of residents polled supported having the locomotive moved to Lamoureux Park, specifically at the corner of Newsy Lalonde Way and Water Street.

The locomotive is currently located just north of the Brookdale traffic circle, near Ninth Street, all but ignored, ironically, while situated very close to another city hub, the Walmart Supercentre.

The issue of what to do with the locomotive had sharply divided council, with some councillors saying getting rid of it would be akin to erasing another piece of Cornwall's history.

But others said there was insufficient support from local groups who wished to save the locomotive.

CORNWALL -- The city of Cornwall has decided to donate a piece of its rail history to another town.

On Feb. 3, Cornwall council endorsed a motion from Coun. Elaine MacDonald to move Locomotive 17, which sits in a state of neglect at the corner of Ninth Street and Brookdale Avenue, to the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario in Smiths Falls.

An original motion brought forward in 2019 on the same issue was defeated.

"There was a really good suggestion that was we should give it a year to see if people could fundraise and I thought that was wonderful," said MacDonald, at the site of the locomotive. "But a year on in, there hadn't been any fundraising."

"There wasn't any massive popular movement and meanwhile you can stop the clock on these things but you can't stop time. So you see what's been happening to this locomotive through all these years of neglect," MacDonald said.

In 2016, the estimate to restore the locomotive was in the range of \$100,000.

The cost to move the train to Smiths Falls will cost approximately \$50,000, with the money coming from city reserves. That money will be paid back next year.

"Smiths Falls has such a wonderful museum that will give it a wonderful home," MacDonald said. "They have proved themselves to be regional thinkers too, because when the Brockville Museum lost their bell a few years ago to theft, it was the Smiths Falls museum who donated them a bell. So, I think this kind of synergy is excellent to foster in our region, so I am happy our little locomotive is going to be part of that."

Some Cornwall residents believe the locomotive should stay in the city, since it's the last remaining item from the Cornwall Street Railway.

"Well I believe the engine really belongs in Cornwall. It was part of the history of the Cornwall Street Railway that made Cornwall what it is today," said Wes Libbery, former president of the SD&G Historical Society.

"That's why Cornwall grew as much as it did and then when they sold the proceeds of the Cornwall Street Railway for \$67 million, they had enough money to pay off their debts and support all the rest of the industry."

Libbey and others from the local heritage group sent a five page letter to the city saying the engine should be saved and moved to the nearby Benson Centre.

"Where people come for sporting events, they have time to study our history, learn of our history," Libbey said. "It's the highest traffic area in Cornwall and it can be protected and watched over there."

When asked about the proposal, MacDonald said that idea was never brought forward to council.

"The city had the money in their budget, the ball was in their court," Libbey added. "And it just became an orphan, which is too bad but now that they've triggered the thing. I think it's time for us to remind them its time to fix it up and keep it here."

"What I have heard is some regret," said MacDonald. "Especially from some people in the heritage committee. We all realize that we missed an opportunity here but frankly at the end of the day I think we've come up with something better."

In Smiths Falls, 140 kilometres east of Cornwall, the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario is excited to have a new piece for its collection.

"We were ecstatic," said Tony Humphrey, president of the board of trustees for the museum. "We are going to refurbish it the best we can. The engine has been terribly neglected. It's been vandalized."

Humphrey said some rail lines in the U.S. still use the Baldwin Steeple-Cab Electric Engine like Locomotive 17 and members are already reaching out to look for parts.

"These were very green engines by the way. They were not dirty old diesels. They were electric and they ran up and down delivering boxcars around the city of Cornwall," Humphrey said.

"We are going to stabilize it, paint it as it was in Cornwall," he added. "Actually, the city of Cornwall has the original decals that are going to go on the side of it. They have the bell too, so our volunteers are just cracking to get at it."

Humphrey said it will likely cost a few dollars to refurbish the engine and the group is actively looking for donors. The museum hopes the locomotive will be ready for display by 2023.

"We are the Railway Museum of Eastern Ontario, so of course this is in our base, Cornwall of course," Humphrey said. "We're in 2021. In 2050, in 2075 that locomotive will still be sitting here in a permanent location and it will be part of the rich history of Cornwall and people from Cornwall, from the area, will be able to come and see it and not just see it but be able to get up and walk through it."

"It's going to be in good hands and it's better than the other option. That other option scares me, when we heard the scrapping thing," Humphrey added.

"I wish the city of Cornwall had a permanent secure location for it. That's unfortunate they don't but it will be in good hands here."

"I hope that people from Cornwall will visit there because our city is going to be mentioned, in fact we will be honoured as being the donors," said MacDonald.

"I really appreciate the fact that the Smiths Falls museum reached out to us and offered to give the locomotive a home. This is so much better than what the alternative could be."

12/03/2021 OKthePK

Lachute

Masson

Station Crushed by Snow Load

Masson Quebec - Built in 1877, prior to takeover by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CP), Buckingham Junction station at Masson, Quebec, on CP's Lachute Subdivision collapsed due to a heavy snow buildup.

The station was added to the list of Canadian Designated Heritage Railway Stations in 1993.

However, that obviously didn't come with any funds to restore the structure.

Now it appears far too late to restore it.

Historic Stone Archway Collapses After Locals Spent Years Trying to Save it

Pembroke Ontario - A stone culvert archway built back in the 1800s under a former railway partially collapsed earlier this week, disappointing many who were hoping the province would do something to prevent its destruction.

The structure of carved rock was originally built to allow a stream to flow under the Gibson rail bed in Pembroke, near Woodstock.

In recent years the archway had become a favourite destination for hikers, photographers, and even wedding parties looking for a unique photographic background.

But after standing for more than a century, the arch was crumbling, and locals pleaded with the province to take steps to restore it.

"It makes me feel really sad and disappointed in the fact that there was hope there in getting it done," said Tammy McLean, an amateur historian.

"But now the hope is gone."

Less than 24 hours after part of the archway caved in, construction crews were on the scene digging up the culvert under the supervision of the Department of Natural Resources.

The collapse resulted in the closure of the Wolastoq Valley walking trail while excavators and dump trucks began work.

"The Department of Natural Resources and Energy Development is aware of the washout near the Northampton Culvert. Staff have been on the scene to ensure that the area is safe and secure. We will continue to monitor the situation closely," said department spokesperson Nick Brown in a statement to CBC News.

The province hasn't said what plans it has to replace the archway, but McLean says construction crews told her they're digging out the old granite stones and will put in a regular steel culvert.

McLean, who was taking photos of the construction, hopes to be able to take home one of the stones for herself to preserve the memory of the arch.

"It's a sad scene because I try to preserve history. Because if you don't preserve history, you have nothing," said McLean.

22/05/2021

*Ottawa Citizen**Beachburg*

The City of Ottawa is buying another rail corridor, first to be used as a pathway

The city is buying an old railway corridor that could one day be used as an O-Train connection from Kanata North to central Ottawa.

That day, however, is likely a long way off.

But the city doesn't want to let a railway corridor go to waste, so it has negotiated with CN to acquire 35.2 kilometres of a defunct train route running from the eastern edge of Kanata North all the way west to Morris Island Drive near the Ottawa River.

Until it's ready to be returned as a rail line, the corridor could be used as a recreational pathway.

Derrick Moodie, the city director in charge of corporate real estate, told council in a memo to expect a report later this year that will propose acquiring part of the old Beachburg [sic] Subdivision railway.

It would cost \$740,000, a steeply discounted rate from assessed land values of between \$6.6 million and \$8.8 million. The negotiated price was much lower in recognition of the lack of demand for the land and the belief that there's currently no financial viability to operate a train system on the corridor.

The city still needs to assess what kind of work is required on the corridor, since there are about seven bridges and 52 culverts. Staff intend to report the maintenance costs to council.

The city has a policy to acquire railway corridors when they become available and if there's funding. There are a couple other old corridors in the city's portfolio; one corridor acquired from CP in 2005 eventually became today's Trillium Line.

City staff in 2019 also informed council that they were considering the acquisition of a second discontinued rail corridor, the Walkley corridor, that cuts across the city, including over the Trillium Line. Moodie's memo didn't mention the Walkley rail corridor.

MORRISBURG A local landmark built during the St. Lawrence Seaway construction is at risk of being torn down.

The Canadian National Railways station off County Road 31 was recently boarded up by the company, and an ATCO-style portable building was placed on site for employees to use. This prompted concern by historians and local railfans that the station might be demolished.

The station, which was constructed in 1956-57 during the St. Lawrence Seaway project is one of only two surviving stations from that era. The station replaced an 1855-built stone station that was located near the present day Giant Tiger on Country Road 2 in the village. The other surviving building from this era is in Cornwall which is still in use by VIA Rail, Canada's national passenger rail company.

Morrisburg and Cornwall are two of five stations constructed at the time by CNR. Iroquois, Long Sault, and Ingleside each had a station of the same design as Morrisburg's in the project.

"At this time, there are no plans to demolish the building or to sell it," said Canadian National spokesperson Daniel Salvatore.

CN discontinued regular passenger stops at the four Seaway stations in 1966. The Morrisburg station continued to be used for excursions by the railway for Expo 67 in Montréal.

There were also regular excursions run into the 1970's bringing school children to Upper Canada Village that used the station. CN employees used the building afterwards as an office and storage space for maintenance materials until 2020.

Chris Granger, a railway historian and former co-chair of Heritage Cornwall, told The Leader that the Morrisburg station design is one of the first to give the look of modernization to railways in the 1950s.

"There are a few of these station styles in existence, but not in their original form," Granger said.

An historically significant event that happened at the station on April 22, 1976 when a CN/VIA TurboTrain set a Canadian rail land speed record of 140.6 miles per hour. This record remains in place still to this date.

One risk of leaving the building as it is in its mothballed state is damage from vandals. This was the fate of a similarly designed station in Iroquois, which was demolished in the early 2000s after significant damage from vandalism.

"[Iroquois] was in absolute terrible shape," Granger said. "Every window was broken out of the frames. The seats were gone. Any electrical equipment that may have been left behind was stripped."

He said that the inside and outside of the building were covered in graffiti, and that trash, feces and large garbage like old mattresses littered the property.

"It was a horrible the mess that was there."

Granger said the Morrisburg station has no historic designation that would prevent it being torn down by the railroad. As the railroad is a federally regulated company, it does not need approvals from a local municipality like South Dundas to demolish structures on its land either. He added that the municipality can initiate a request for Federal Heritage Designation for the building through the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada.

The Town of Prescott designated its 1855 stone railway station in this manner. That station remains on its original location next to the CN tracks, is owned by the town, and is used by the Grenville County Historical Society. Granger suggested this or another preservation option could take place.

"I have been asked if the building could be moved someplace like the Lost Villages Museum," he explained. "We have moved large stone buildings, brick and frame buildings, so yes [Morrisburg's station] could be moved there. It may even be a good example to show a building after the Seaway opened."

In Granger's opinion, if CN would allow it, the building could be a research or archive building similar to Prescott.

"I believe an attempt should be made to try to preserve the station," he said. "I also believe that in doing so, the building should be repurposed to ensure a viable life for it."

Officials with CN were asked if the company had any plans for the building, no response was given.

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04/06/2021

Global News

Kingston (CN)

Kingston

Kingston Ontario - Kingston police have charged a local man after he allegedly assaulted a VIA Rail employee during an altercation about wearing a mask.

According to police, Thursday around 14:00 a man entered the Kingston VIA station without a mask and bought a train ticket to Montreal. Police say the employee behind the customer service desk repeatedly asked the man to wear a mask, which is currently mandatory during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the man refused.

When he was not allowed to board the train without a mask, the same employee confronted the man, who then allegedly punched the employee on the back of the neck.

When police arrived, they say the man was still on the platform waiting to board the train bound for Montreal.

The man was reportedly impaired by alcohol.

A 56-year-old man was arrested and charged with assault.

10/06/2021

Belleville Intelligencer

Brockville and Ottawa

Brockville Tunnel

Railway Tunnel Opens Friday

Brockville Ontario - When Brockville residents join people across Ontario to dine in outdoor patios Friday, they can cool off afterward with a walk in the Brockville Railway Tunnel.

City Hall announced earlier this week the popular attraction will open Friday morning as the province enters Stage One of its gradual re-emergence from COVID-19 lockdown.

The tunnel will open at 09:00, Friday, and operate on a nine-to-nine schedule, with the same caveats in place as in last year's mid-pandemic reopening.

"We are asking people to wear their masks while they are in the tunnel, which is the same as we did last year," said city manager Janette Loveys.

In keeping with provincial guidelines, Loveys suggested people "use with caution" if they see more than 10 people in the tunnel.

Other safety measures in place last year included advising tunnel-goers to stay to the right and respect physical distancing with no congregating.

City officials are excited to be able to reopen the tunnel, added Loveys.

The waning of the pandemic's third wave is allowing the city to reopen the tunnel earlier than last year, when it was open from mid August to early October.

Echoing comments earlier in the week from Mayor Jason Baker, Loveys said the city's goal is to balance safety with a reopening of businesses and activities.

25/06/2021

Global News

Kingston (CN)

Brockville

Luggage Theft from VIA Rail Station Prompts Arrest Warrant

Brockville Ontario - Police say a man wanted for theft is on the loose in Brockville with someone's luggage.

On Wednesday, police say a man was caught on security cameras stealing luggage at the VIA Rail station on Perth Street.

The suspect, 42-year-old Kevin Dunn, was released 17 May 2021 following a bail hearing and faces 21 charges in relation to incidents between February 2020 and April 2021.

Brockville police did not provide a list of those charges, nor have they answered a request for the list.

Police have since issued a warrant for Dunn's arrest for failing to comply with a probation order and theft under \$5,000.

Police say Dunn is most likely still in Brockville, and ask anyone with information about the investigation to call them at 613-342-0127 ext. 0 or Crime Stoppers at 1-800-222-TIPS (8477).

RICHMOND HILL, ON, June 30, 2021 /CNW/ - The Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) is deploying a team of investigators following an accident involving a VIA Rail passenger train and a commercial road vehicle in Richmond, Ontario. The TSB will gather information and assess the occurrence.

The TSB is an independent agency that investigates air, marine, pipeline, and rail transportation occurrences. Its sole aim is the advancement of transportation safety. It is not the function of the Board to assign fault or determine civil or criminal liability.

The TSB is online at www.tsb.gc.ca. Keep up to date through RSS, Twitter (@TSBCanada), Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr.

SOURCE Transportation Safety Board of Canada

30/06/2021 CTV News

Smiths Falls

Richmond

OTTAWA -- One person is dead following a collision involving a train and a truck in the Richmond area.

Emergency crews responded to a call for a collision at Barnsdale Road and Eagleson Road at approximately 12:20 p.m.

Ottawa Paramedics tell CTV News Ottawa one person was pronounced dead at the scene.

Police will only say the Collision Investigations Unit is on scene investigating.

Barnsdale Road is closed in both directions from Eagleson Road to Twin Elm Road and Eagleson Road is closed from Ottawa Street to Perth Street.

Due to the collision, the railroad crossing gates are malfunctioning on McBean Street and Ottawa Street.

02/07/2021 Ottawa Citizen

Smiths Falls

Richmond

Police confirm one dead in crash involving train, vehicle at Barnsdale and Eagleson roads

The Transportation Safety Board announced it would deploy a team of investigators to the collision site to "gather information and assess the occurrence."

Jun 30, 2021

A vehicle-train collision on Barnsdale Road on June 30, 2021 has left one person dead.

A person is dead following a collision between a train and vehicle Wednesday afternoon at Barnsdale and Eagleson roads in the city's west end Richmond district.

The Ottawa Police Service said that they were called to the crash at about 12:20 p.m. In a later Twitter post, Ottawa police said the 28-year-old driver of the vehicle died at the scene.

Via Rail confirmed that train 53 - Ottawa, Kingston, Toronto - was involved in a rail crossing collision at 12:16 p.m. None of the 120 passengers on board or railway staff were hurt, the company said.

At the time, Via said the crash would impact the schedule of train #40 and possibly trains #55 and #42 with an expected delay of about three hours.

The company's Twitter account posted at 6:13 p.m. Wednesday that "alternative transportation has been provided to all passengers from train 53."

Train service on the line has since resumed.

The Transportation Safety Board also announced Wednesday that it would be deploying a team of investigators to the site of the collision to "gather information and assess the occurrence."

07/07/2021 CBC News

Prescott

Prince of Wales Bridge

Former Prince of Wales Bridge Gets \$14 Million in City Funding

Ottawa Ontario - Residents are one step closer to being able to walk, cycle, and perhaps even cross-country ski across the Ottawa River at Bayview Station after Ottawa city council voted to help pay to rehabilitate the bridge, as well as rename it.

City councillors voted to immediately rename the interprovincial crossing, formerly known as the Prince of Wales Bridge, to the Chief William Commanda Bridge, and commit \$14 million on fixing the bridge.

Coun. Carol Anne Meehan, who expressed concerns over the price tag of the project, was the only councillor to dissent on Mayor Jim Watson's motion to fund and rename the former Prince of Wales Bridge.

"This is simply going to be a huge tourism draw in Ottawa," said Kitchissippi Coun. Jeff Leiper, who represents the ward that includes the bridge, and who seconded the mayor's motion.

"It will be a four-season gem, recreationally in the city, and it's really going to be a really key part of our transportation network for active transportation, bringing people safely back and forth to Gatineau."

Project to Cost \$22.6 Million

The city bought the rail bridge from Canadian Pacific Railway in 2005 to be used as a transit link between Ottawa and Gatineau sometime in the future.

But that might be a long way off, in part because Gatineau is planning for its future tram to cross the river using the nearby Portage Bridge.

Turning the 1.3 kilometre bridge into a multi-use pathway for foot traffic will cost a total of \$22.5 million, \$12.1 million for the path itself, including beefed-up railings, LED lighting, and a few benches, and \$10.4 million to restore the piers holding up the bridge.

Sneaking onto the bridge has always held allure for some residents.

Tragically, two people have died in as many as years after swimming off the bridge.

It's not yet clear if, or how, the retrofit will discourage people from jumping into the river below.

Of the money committed to fixing the bridge, \$5 million will be set aside for the pier work, which was already budgeted for.

On Wednesday council approved an additional \$9 million to the plan, which came from development charge and transit reserve funds.

In the coming days, the federal government is expected to announce it is funding the remaining \$8.6 million.

Local MP and Infrastructure Minister Catherine McKenna, who recently announced she's not running for re-election, made reopening the bridge a campaign promise in 2019

The project should go out to tender this summer, at which point city officials should have a better idea of when it might be completed.

Article abridged - irrelevant data on re-naming deleted.

20/07/2021 Global News

Brockville and Ottawa

Brockville

Aquarium Opens Train Ride That Runs Through Historic Railway Tunnel

Brockville Ontario - The Aquarium Express is up and running in downtown Brockville, bringing visitors of all ages around Blockhouse Island and through the city's historic railway tunnel.

The ride begins outside the Brockville Visitor's Centre, and the train takes its riders for a 15 minute loop around the city's waterfront.

Tickets must be bought in advance and cars are limited due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Aquarium suggests booking some time in advance, since rides have been sold out every day since it opened on Friday.

The Aquarium itself opened last Saturday.

Stretch of Barnsdale Road Reopens After Ongoing Probe of Fatal Crash Involving Train

Ottawa Ontario - A stretch of Barnsdale Road was reopened at about noon Friday as as Ottawa police collision investigators helped the Transportation Safety Board of Canada (TSB) with the ongoing probe of a fatal crash involving a train and a vehicle last month.

A 28-year-old driver died at the scene of the 30 Jun 2021 collision.

Police have not identified the victim.

VIA Rail confirmed that one of its trains was involved in a rail crossing collision near Richmond.

No other injuries were reported.

The TSB said that it would deploy a team of investigators to gather information and assess the occurrence.

03/09/2021 *Ottawa Citizen**Kingston (CN)**Prescott*

2021, September 2 - Two CNR freight trains collide at Prescott, derailling four locomotives and 16 cars, one minor injury.

The collision on the main CN Rail line just west of Edward Street startled residents and workers with a loud bang shortly before 10:30 a.m., leaving two locomotives on their side near the town's water tower and containers strewn across the immediate area.

In a statement, CN indicated four locomotives had derailed and approximately 16 cars had also derailed in various positions. It appeared that the damaged cars extended just east of the overpass. There was a minor fuel leak from one of the locomotives.

Ontario Provincial Police said one person was hurt.

"One individual only from incident with minor injuries," the OPP reported via Twitter.

CN confirmed that one crew member was in stable condition; the other crew members were taken to hospital as a precaution.

While there was no sign of a fire at the scene, police were keeping curious onlookers at a distance as officials tried to confirm whether any chemicals were involved.

No fires or dangerous goods have been reported, according to the CN statement.

A notice on the town's website confirmed there is no danger to the public.

None of the overturned box cars were carrying hazardous substances and following a meeting of the Town of Prescott Emergency Management Group, there are currently no concerns for the safety and well-being of residents, the statement noted.

Prescott Towing owner Steve Rainey was at his business on Churchill Road West when the collision occurred.

"I thought it was an earthquake," he said. "It shook the ground, for sure."

Other bystanders from different parts of town also reported hearing the crash.

The Edward Street overpass was closed as of noon, but reopened to vehicles and pedestrians by 1 p.m. Rail cars on the north track were blocking the Boundary Street crossing, but the Sophia Street crossing was open to traffic. The Boundary crossing remained closed into the evening.

There were no longer rail cars blocking Boundary Street as of early Friday morning, and the barricade at Churchill Road had been removed. A crew was on the scene and appeared to be testing the crossing signals.

"I am very thankful that the train derailment in Prescott has not resulted in loss of life, and that we fortunately managed to avoid even more serious consequences earlier today," Mayor Brett Todd stated in a revised town release on Thursday afternoon.

"While our thoughts and best wishes are with the injured CN employee, a walk through the scene of the collision made it clear that this could have been much worse. I am also grateful to have avoided significant damage to Prescott infrastructure like our Edward Street rail overpass and utility connections in the area, and that this incident did not involve hazardous materials."

CN indicated the cause of the collision is under investigation. As for the cleanup effort and when the main line might reopen to freight and passenger rail traffic, no details had been provided as of mid-afternoon. Heavy machinery had started arriving by late afternoon; the clean-up effort was in full swing early Friday morning.

Although the overpass is open, the public is being asked not to congregate there. Dozens of people were standing on the overpass at about 6 p.m. There were barricades at the top of the overpass to keep northbound and southbound vehicles away from pedestrians on both sides of the structure.

"The company apologizes to local residents for the inconvenience caused by this incident," the statement read. "CN thanks the first responders at the scene."

Thursday's incident was the worst local derailment in 16 years.

It was a hot Monday afternoon in early July 2005 when an eastbound freight train with about 50 empty tanker cars derailed just east of the Edward Street overpass. No injuries were reported. About 2,000 feet of main track was destroyed. An investigation concluded that a portion of track had buckled in the heat.

03/09/2021 *Brockville Recorder**Kingston (CN)**Prescott*

Prescott Derailment Cleanup Continues

3 September 2021

Prescott Ontario - Crews remain at the scene of a train derailment in Prescott on Friday morning.

Many of the "approximately 16" cars that derailed in the Thursday morning collision involving two cargo trains had been cleared from the scene just west of the Edward Street overpass by 07:00, Friday, CN officials said.

One crew member was injured in the incident, OPP and CN reported on Thursday.

The Boundary Street crossing, which had been blocked into the night, reopened by early Friday morning.

The Recorder and Times is awaiting an update from CN on the cleanup and investigation.

Rail tracks just west of the overpass had also been removed by early Friday morning.

Two locomotives remained on their sides on the northern edge of the main line.

The collision and derailment did not cause a fire, and no hazardous materials were reportedly involved.

There was a minor fuel leak from a locomotive, according to CN.

"I want to thank our dedicated Prescott Volunteer Fire Department for such outstanding work on the scene, along with our always impressive partners with the Grenville OPP, all other first responders, and of course, CN," Prescott mayor Brett Todd stated in a town news release Thursday.

Rail Tracks Back in Service After Prescott Freight Train Derailment

4 September 2021

Prescott Ontario - Most of the cars that had derailed in the Thursday morning collision involving two freight trains just west of the Edward Street overpass had been cleared from the scene as of late Friday afternoon.

One crew member was injured in the incident, OPP and CN reported on Thursday.

The process of clearing what CN had indicated were about 16 derailed cars continued through the night and Friday.

Rail tracks just west of the overpass had been removed by early Friday morning

A section of damaged track just east of the overpass was being replaced late Friday afternoon.

Two locomotives remained on their sides near the siding on the northern edge of the main line on Saturday afternoon.

In an update issued late Friday afternoon, CN indicated that the south track was scheduled to return to operation by 20:00, Friday.

Partial service was indeed restored on Friday night as trains at reduced speeds began to make their way through Prescott again.

By mid-afternoon on Saturday, the north track had been replaced and was in use.

"Both tracks have now been safely reopened and train circulation has resumed," CN stated in a release on Saturday.

"Crews will continue to work with local first responders to safely clear the remaining derailed locomotives and cars."

The collision and derailment did not cause a fire, and no hazardous materials were reportedly involved.

There was a minor fuel leak from a locomotive, according to CN.

"I want to thank our dedicated Prescott volunteer Fire Department for such outstanding work on the scene, along with our always impressive partners with the Grenville OPP, all other first responders, and of course, CN," Prescott Mayor Brett Todd stated in a town news release Thursday. Todd also said the outcome could have been much worse, noting that infrastructure such as the overpass was spared serious damage.

The investigation into the cause of the collision and derailment is ongoing, CN Rail indicated.

"CN would like to apologize for the inconvenience resulting from this incident."

The company has not confirmed in its statements how many rail cars in total were on the tracks at the time of the collision and derailment and how many crew members were involved.

All were taken to hospital as a precaution, CN reported on Thursday.

Although the overpass was open to vehicles and pedestrians, the town had asked the public to avoid congregating on the structure and near the derailment scene.

There were dozens of people standing on the overpass and watching the activity below late Friday afternoon.

There were about 20 people there late Saturday afternoon.

The Boundary Street crossing, which had been blocked by rail cars on the north track following the collision and derailment, reopened to traffic late Thursday night.

23/09/2021 CTV News

Kingston (CN)

Mallorytown

Front of Yonge Township says fix crossing, then they'll endorse CN Rail Safety Week

MALLORYTOWN, ONT. -- This week is CN Rail Safety Week across North America, a campaign that promotes safety awareness around rail lines.

However, one eastern Ontario Township is refusing to jump on the campaign, saying one of their crossings is unsafe.

Train whistles are a common sound for residents living in Front of Yonge Township and the Village of Mallorytown, throughout the day and through the night.

It's an issue KOA Campground owner and township councillor Richard Marcoux says they are trying to fix.

"It's a constant feedback from our clients from the noise, they can't sleep, it's very disruptive," Marcoux said. "They think they're coming camping in a rural area and it's worse than being in the city."

To propose ceasing whistles between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m., a Train Whistle Cessation Study was implemented by the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville in 2017.

It revealed that three of the four crossings in the township would need minor safety improvements. It also noted the most dangerous crossing, right in the village, needs major upgrades, according to township Mayor Roger Haley.

"There's line of sights, road safety, the crossing is too high, it's just a mess," Haley said. "Since that time, almost five years now, we've been working on the safety of this crossing."

A national Transportation Safety Board report from April 2019 also noted that, "Whistle cessation may be implemented once recommended actions for safety improvements at the crossing have been completed."

A train derailment at the crossing on County Road 4 occurred in 2008, involving a semi truck and a VIA Rail passenger train.

Ten people were injured when a truck with a low-boy trailer got hung up on the tracks and was hit by an eastbound train.

Haley said after that incident, only one minor safety change was made to the crossing.

"All they did after the derailment was put a sign up on either side of the tracks saying low-lying trucks shouldn't use this crossing," Haley said.

"A few weeks ago, (CN) sent out a request for municipalities to endorse Sept. 20 to the 26 for Rail Safety Week," he added. "My council, we were quite surprised given the situation here, and why would we do that? Why would we endorse a company that doesn't abide by its own safety regulations? It's sort of hypocritical."

Haley said he's even reached out to federal transportation ministers for help on the issue, but nothing has come of it.

"The past two ministers, the current minister and the former minister, I contacted both of them with the transport safety board's recommendations and they haven't responded," he said. "And they haven't responded to our MP Michael Barrett either."

Both men say they were in discussions with CN after the engineering study was released, but talks have now slowed.

"In this case CN is ignoring us," Marcoux said. "They are just not participating at all, they are not living up to their end of the bargain and this rail safety week is like an insult to us."

"So far they've called us maybe once a year saying, 'Oh yeah, we're on top of it,' but they haven't done anything about it," added Haley.

"Nobody would build a road like a ski ramp that we have here, and that's what that truck got hung up on," said Marcoux.

Marcoux said rail-crossing upgrades, when underway, would be a joint effort between the rail authority and road authority.

"From what I understand, those two authorities come to an agreement, split the cost and there are even government grants we've been told about that help with these type of things," he said. "But, until CN will come to the table and talk with the road authority, we can't even get started."

"This is very frustrating," he said.

"Once it's all safe, we can have the whistles turned off, but the first thing is we've got to get this (crossing) safe," said Marcoux.

"It's just very disappointing that CN asks for an endorsement for a safety week but they don't show that they have many serious thoughts about doing that," added Haley.

CTV News Ottawa reached out to CN Rail for comment regarding the Mallorytown crossing, but hasn't heard back at the time of publishing.

OTTAWA -- The city of Ottawa is set to purchase a former CN Rail corridor in the west end, which could be used for transportation or recreational purposes in the future.

A report for the Finance and Economic Development Committee recommends purchasing the 32.5 kilometre Beachburg Subdivision corridor for \$740,000.

The corridor starts in the western Greenbelt, and extends northwest through Kanata terminating at Morris Island Drive, just east of the Ottawa River. It passes south and west of Department of National Defence Facilities, near existing employment and residential areas of Kanata, and has seven bridges and 52 culverts.

"The rail corridor has been decommissioned, has not been used for many years, and the railway tracks and ties have been removed," says the report for the Oct. 5 FEDCO meeting.

"The corridor is used and maintained by the West Carleton Snowmobile Trails Association (WCSTA), which has a 20-year license with CN that expires in 2038."

Staff say purchasing the corridor to Morris Island Drive enables the city to provide a potential connection to a location near the conservation area.

"The acquisition of the corridor lands and bridge will provide an opportunity for the city to improve the road network at this location and upgrades to the Carling Avenue Cycling project without having to independently acquire the land," said the report.

The city of Ottawa's Official Plan Rights-of-Way Protection Policy states that the city will purchase surplus railway rights-of-way and consider purchasing railway corridor properties as they become available, and reserve them for future transportation and infrastructure purposes.

14/10/2021

Ottawa Citizen

Beachburg

The City of Ottawa will complete the purchase of an old rail corridor through north Kanata and the rural west area. Council approved the \$740,000 purchase of part of the old Beachburg Subdivision between the western part of the Greenbelt and Morris Island Conservation Area. It's a 35-kilometre corridor that could help the city's long-term transportation needs.

29/11/2021

OKthePK

Prescott

Prince of Wales Bridge

From the Ottawa Citizen

City and Feds Break Ground on Bridge Pathway Slated to Open Next Fall

Ottawa Ontario - A project is officially underway to turn a disused rail bridge into a new way to get between west-end Ottawa and Gatineau for work or play.

City and federal officials broke ground Monday on the multi-use pathway on the Chief William Commanda Bridge (Prince of Wales Bridge) over the Ottawa River, including structural repairs to the bridge and deck work.

The pathway is scheduled to open next fall, the City of Ottawa said in a release Monday, but work on the piers and connection to Lemieux Island will continue until the summer of 2024.

The city is spending \$14 million on the project while the federal government kicks in \$8.6 million.

The bridge, built as a railway link in 1880, was last in service two decades ago.

The city bought it from Canadian Pacific Railway in 2005 with an eye to a future light-rail corridor.

City hall now says that as a multi-use pathway, the bridge will serve as a year-round commuting and recreation link for walking, running, rollerblading, cycling, and cross-country skiing.

The project includes rehabilitating the bridge's structural components and building a new timber deck on top of the existing track while maintaining the steel rails for future rail transit use.

There will be a steel cable railing system, LED lighting, and 12 new benches along the pathway linked to Ottawa's Trillium Pathway, connecting to Bayview Station, and to the National Capital Commission's Voyageurs Pathway in Gatineau.

30/11/2021

CTV News

Alexandria

OTTAWA -- By the end of next year, your train ride to Toronto or Montreal could be a lot more comfortable.

Via Rail previewed the first of 32 new Siemens trains on Tuesday at their Tremblay Road station in Ottawa.

"Canadians' journeys will never be the same," says Martin Landry, Chief Commercial Officer with Via Rail.

The trains will be used on the Windsor-Quebec City corridor, serving destinations such as Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto. Some of the new enhanced features on the train include:

wider aisles;

adjustable tray tables;

more comfortable headrests;

automatic touchless interior doors; and

high-speed reliable wifi.

Liberal MP for Ottawa South David McGuinty was on hand at the preview and says, "I can tell you they are going to offer a new era of comfort and efficiency for the worker, the families, and the tourists, who travel on these tracks."

Passengers are expected to board the new trains by the end of 2022.

Winter trials will begin overnight on the track in Ottawa. Crews will test out the new train and its advanced technology in harsh conditions like snow and extreme cold.

Landry says Canadian winter poses a challenge for the trains. "The train could start in Windsor with rain, come into Toronto with freezing rain and by the time it gets to Quebec City it is a snowstorm" those conditions are really taxing. We want to go through the full winter test through to the spring time."

The trains are also fully accessible, and each includes onboard wheelchair elevators, large accessible washrooms, braille, and signage.

Via Rail says the trains are some of the most environmentally friendly intercity fleets in North America. They include diesel engines and are bidirectional.

McGuinty says "These bidirectional trains can operate in both directions, which will save time and reduce delays."

Cynthia Garneau, VIA Rail President and CEO, says making sure the trains were environmentally friendly was a priority and they will continue to find ways to reduce the footprint.

"We will be in a position to reduce waste on our trains, so we will do pilot projects and put them in place throughout the corridor," she says.

Garneau adds the new fleet "marks a new era for passenger rail service in the corridor, where we served over 4.7 million passengers in 2019 and which represented 96% of our ridership pre-pandemic."

05/12/2021

BrockBrockville Newswatc

Kingston (CN)

Brockville

Pedestrian killed at Brockville railway crossing

by Bill Kingston

BROCKVILLE - A pedestrian has died after being struck by a freight train at a Brockville crossing early this morning (Sunday).

City police say it happened near the Perth Street crossing around 1:15 a.m. along the westbound Canadian National Railway tracks.

The victim is described as a youth but no other details are being released by police as an investigation is ongoing.

CNR police, OPP Forensic Identification and detectives with the Brockville Police Service are conducting the investigation.

The intersection of Perth Street and Delhi Street was closed for the investigation but opened around daybreak this morning.

Youth Dies After Being Hit by Train

5 December 2021

Brockville Ontario - Brockville police say a youth has died after being hit by a train early Sunday morning.

Police said they were called to the CN tracks at Perth Street at around 01:15 after a freight train struck a pedestrian.

The identity of the victim has not been released.

"On behalf of the Brockville Police Service and everyone involved in this incident, I would like to share my deepest sympathies to the family and friends of the person lost," Staff Sergeant Darryl Boyd said in a press release.

The investigation is ongoing with the Brockville Police Service, CN Police, and the OPP.

15/12/2021

Ottawa Citizen

Otrain

Walkley

City wants to expand Trillium Line depot lands in \$6.4M deal with CP Rail

A decision on spending the money forms part of meeting on Friday, when the finance and economic development committee learns the state of the Stage 2 O-Train expansion.

The city should pay nearly \$6.4 million to acquire more land at the Trillium Line train depot in case it's useful for future rail operations, staff recommend.

A decision on spending the money forms part of meeting on Friday, when the finance and economic development committee learns the state of the Stage 2 O-Train expansion.

It's been a long time since council members have received a substantial update on the construction schedule, even though staff suggested last winter that they were looking into a possible delay of work on the Trillium Line. Staff eventually told councillors they would have to wait until the end of 2021 to get a full update.

SNC-Lavalin, working under the project name TransitNEXT, is under contract to substantially complete the expanded Trillium Line in August 2022.

Under the city's \$4.6-billion Stage 2 project, the Trillium Line expansion would be the first job completed, followed by the Confederation Line LRT east extension in 2024 and the LRT west extension in 2025. East-West Connectors, a partnership of Kiewit and Vinci, is constructing the LRT extensions.

Because the city has been wrapped up in contract fights over the O-Train project, largely because of disputes with Stage 1 builder and maintainer Rideau Transit Group, the committee on Friday is scheduled to have a closed briefing on the legal proceedings.

The committee will be asked to make a decision on acquiring more of the Trillium Line maintenance and storage lands with time ticking down on a decision deadline.

In a report to the committee, staff recommend buying 14.46 acres of CP Rail land, much of which the city currently leases at Walkley Yard. The city has leased 8.5 acres of land since 2001 and is using adjacent city-owned land, along with a small portion of acquired land, for the Stage 2 Trillium Line facility.

The lease expires on Dec. 31 and the city has an option to purchase expiring on that date. Staff have been negotiating with CP for the larger land acquisition and a discount on the price considering the environmental condition of the land, the report says.

They have a deal on the table with a price of \$6,362,400. In the report, staff state that the cost can be covered by money in accounts earmarked for protecting transit corridors.

"Acquisition of the lands will permit immediate and long-term expansion opportunities for the new maintenance facility; protect future transit uses and planning; and is a strategic acquisition," the report states.

Staff also want to secure a purchase option for 40 acres of other CP land in the area, according to the report.