



A WAY NORTH: A CAMPAIGN TO REVIVE ONTARIO NORTHLAND RAIL PASSENGER SERVICE

All Aboard Northern Ontario, a grassroots citizens' advocacy group, is developing a conceptual plan to identify the requirements for recreating a viable and sustainable Toronto-North Bay-Cochrane rail passenger service, as well as needed improvements to other rail and intercity bus services across Northeastern Ontario.

With a population of approximately 750 000 people (north of Toronto), the route of the discontinued *Northlander* is arguably one of the most densely populated corridors in Central and Northeastern Ontario. Yet, due to significant reductions in rail, bus, and air services since 1990, many of the region's seniors, students, and medical patients are faced with fewer intercommunity transportation options required to travel many hundreds of kilometres, resulting in an increased level of isolation.

Utilizing the services and expertise of veteran railway consultant Greg Gormick, All Aboard Northern Ontario will present a practical and credible transportation solution to make the case for a revived passenger train service throughout the corridor previously served by the discontinued *Northlander*.

The concept plan must ask and answer these basic questions:

- (1) Why was the *Northlander* discontinued?
- (2) How can the issues leading to the *Northlander's* discontinuance be overcome?
- (3) What are the equipment and service options for a revived service?
- (4) How much will it cost to revive the Toronto-North Bay-Cochrane service?
- (5) How long will it take to revive this service?
- (6) What are the steps necessary to make this happen?
- (7) How can Northern Ontarians assist in making this happen?

OBJECTIVES

- Present the short-, mid- and long-range scenarios for the reinstatement of service on the route of the former *Northlander*, with the Ontario Northland Transportation Commission (ONTC) as the service provider
- Identify one-time investments and ongoing funding needed to fulfill this service (including, but not limited to, equipment purchases, rail infrastructure upgrading and capacity expansion, and day-to-day operation of the train)
- Identify the region's existing public transportation services and how they will compliment and feed the revived ONTC rail service
- Utilize this concept plan to mobilize elected officials and the general public

EXPENSES

- Data collection and research
- Preparation of a conceptual plan and PowerPoint presentation
- Promotion of the concept through town hall meetings
- Media outreach
- ONTC outreach
- Engagement with municipal, provincial and federal politicians, and candidates
- Travel-related expenses for the town hall and political engagement aspects of the project, including:
 - Lodging
 - Travel costs
 - Promotion
- Hall rentals for public meetings in: District of Cochrane
District of Temiskaming
District of Nipissing
District of Parry Sound (Almaguin)
District of Muskoka

Preliminary Budget: \$10,000

SUCCEES TO DATE

Within three months of launching All Aboard Northern Ontario, the organization has accumulated nearly 300 subscribers and 117+ social media followers. We have gained mainstream media attention across the province (see attachments).

Opposition parties at Queen's Park have identified the revival of rail passenger service in Northeastern Ontario as a priority in their platforms, and All Aboard Northern Ontario has played a role in stimulating this interest and commitment.

In short, the timing for the development of a concept plan to facilitate the reinstatement of an ONTC rail passenger service couldn't be better.

The concept plan is vital to All Aboard Northern Ontario's drive to reach out to the public and the media, demonstrating to our elected officials and candidates how modern, affordable and reliable rail passenger service in Central and Northeastern Ontario can and should be an effective transportation solution for our region.

Yours sincerely,

Éric Boutilier,
Founder,
All Aboard Northern Ontario.

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