

From: Lance McIntosh [REDACTED]
Sent: November 2, 2021 11:57 AM
To: John Henderson <jhenderson@cobourg.ca>; Suzanne Séguin <sseguain@cobourg.ca>; Nicole Beatty <nbeatty@cobourg.ca>; Brian Darling <bdarling@cobourg.ca>; Emily Chorley <echorley@cobourg.ca>; Aaron Burchat <aburchat@cobourg.ca>; Adam Bureau <abureau@cobourg.ca>
Cc: Clerk Cobourg <clerk@cobourg.ca>
Subject: (EXTERNAL SOURCE) Proposed addition to the Agenda of the next Meeting of the Committee of the Whole

Good morning, Mr. Mayor and Council Members:

I am writing to you to request that the following item be added to the next Meeting of the Cobourg Committee of the Whole scheduled, as I read the web page, for Monday November

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Good morning Mr. Mayor and Council Members:

I am writing to you to request that the following item be added to the next Meeting of the Cobourg Committee of the Whole scheduled, as I read the web page, for Monday November 15th:
- reinstatement of Via commuter train 651 for the benefit of commuters in Cobourg.

BACKGROUND:

I sent the email below to Via Rail "*Customer Service*" as the most recent missive in an on-going/continuing effort by several Cobourg and Port Hope-based commuters to ascertain exactly what it is that Via is doing [if anything] to reinstate Train 651, the 7:00am

commuter train [7:10am in Port Hope], that allows well in excess of one hundred people living from Trenton to Port Hope to be able to work in Toronto without the necessity of having to live there... the best of both worlds, if you will.

Two other commuters, one from Cobourg and one from Port Hope, are working with me together on, and fully engaged in, this effort.

Our collective attempts to get a *credible* response from anyone at Via containing even a modicum of relevant information have been met with either total silence or, more recently, a continuing stall - what we do get is pabulum, a set of stock responses most recently served up by '*Stephanie*' of the Customer Support Desk.

I don't know what, if anything, Cobourg Town Council might be able to do to assist us in, at a minimum, obtaining an HONEST response from someone in Via's senior mgmt. team as to what exactly it is that they intend to do with respect to the only commuter train that allows us as a group to live here in the Port Hope/Cobourg area, and work in Toronto.

If they are not intending to reinstate that train we all, as commuters, face rather bleak near term travel prospects with the winter months approaching.

I have already communicated with the Mayor and was updated as to his own activities but, I felt it might be worthwhile to raise the issue at Council level.

I was informed that this is the right way to do it.

Now, if I am in error, please accept my apologies for not following proper form or protocol, and please consider the matter on its merits as an Agenda item for Council to discuss.

Thank you, in advance, for any assistance Cobourg Town Council might be able to offer. Respectfully,
Lance McIntosh CPA, CA [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Service** <service@viarail.ca> Date: Mon, 25 Oct 2021 at 07:34 Subject: RE: VIA Rail Canada
To: [REDACTED] >

Good morning,

Thank you for your email concerning your recent experience with VIA Rail Canada.

We appreciate your taking the time to offer us your comments and suggestions. Customer feedback is a valuable tool in our continuing efforts to improve our services. You may be assured that the suggestions of concerned Canadians, such as yourself, are taken seriously. Your comments regarding the continued suspension of Train 651 have been forwarded to the responsible manager for consideration.

Again, thank you for writing and allowing us the benefit of your observations and recommendations. We would welcome the opportunity to serve you again soon.

Kind regards, Stephanie

Customer Support Desk VIA Rail Canada

Original Message

From: Lance McIntosh [REDACTED] Sent: 18/10/2021 11:42 PM
To: service@viarail.ca

Subject: VIA Rail Canada : schedules & bookings

Good morning:

I live in the town of Cobourg, Ontario. Prior to the impact of the pandemic, Via Rail ran a very profitable Kingston to Toronto run every weekday morning. It left Cobourg @ 7:00am and arrived in Toronto by 8:25am - a true commuter train. It would not be too much to say that the 7:00am Via train was a lifeline for all of the commuters that live in Cobourg, Port Hope and the towns east of Cobourg, but must travel to work in Toronto. This morning train was also almost always sold out and, as such, had to be a profitable [in line with Via's financial and operations analysis] run for Via.

During the pandemic, the morning commuter run was suspended/cancelled (?). There are a large number of Cobourg-based commuters [not to mention commuters in Port Hope and all along the line from Kingston to Oshawa] that are being forced to drive to Oshawa each day and board the GO train. The negative impacts on former Via commuters from this change in commuting include, but are not limited to: excess commuting time; excess risk due to highway driving to Oshawa and back to Cobourg or any other town along the route; excess travel cost; and, depreciation of vehicles.

Commuters in Cobourg are also evidencing increased levels of frustration towards Via Rail - the simple fact is that Via Rail currently runs several trains a day through Cobourg, but not one of them are of any use to those of us who commute. The first train to Toronto doesn't arrive in Cobourg until 11:37am and has a scheduled arrival in Toronto of 12:48pm. This timetable is useless to any of us who have jobs that depend on us being able to travel to Toronto and arrive at a more suitable time to start a work day.

None of us can understand the business case for this continuing refusal to reinstate the Kingston-Toronto run. Could you please let us know why the morning train to Toronto remains suspended or, worse, has been cancelled? If it has only been suspended - when can we, hopefully, expect service to resume?

To sum up - as a commuter on the Via 7:00 am morning train from Cobourg, I fail to see

the logic behind Via Rail senior management continuing to ignore proven existing commuter demand that is increasing daily as the lock down and related work from home requirements are loosened and more people are required or chose to return to their offices or places of work in Toronto.

I shudder to think of the potential for injury, potentially serious injury, based on the necessity for the daily commuters who live east of Bowmanville having to drive to Oshawa each day, in particular in the winter months.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email message. I look forward to your reply.

yours truly

Lance McIntosh CPA,CA

Via Preference number: XXXXX

