



OPTA NEWS

NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO PUBLIC TRANSIT ASSOCIATION

COURTESY SEATING COMMUNICATIONS PROGRAM

OPTA has retained the services of McCorkindale Advertising & Design of Waterloo to assist in the design of a communications program to help transit systems meet the requirements of Section 49 in the Integrated AODA Regulations (IAR). The program will follow the approach mapped out by an OPTA Working Group last fall which has developed signage and language for both priority seating and courtesy seating. The anticipated completion date is late February. The final program will provide transit systems with print-ready materials including interior and exterior advertising collaterals, online static web elements, posters, print advertising and press release content. Transit systems will have the flexibility to adapt these components for their own use in order to communicate with local stakeholders. OPTA is utilizing the "Training, Research and Promotion Fund" to cover the costs of this initiative on behalf of members.

MEETING WITH MINISTER BOB CHIARELLI

OPTA and CUTA held their first meeting with the Hon. Bob Chiarelli, the new Minister of Transportation, on January 18th. Among the topics covered: the need to continue funding for and flexibility of the gas tax program; performance metrics in the transit industry, and the exemption set to expire on hand-held devices as per Bill 118 [please see below]. The Minister is anxious to work with the industry on the Bill 118 issue and has also agreed to meet with OPTA again once the Drummond Report has been tabled to discuss any implications the recommendations may have for the industry.

BILL 118 AND PHASE-OUT OF HAND-HELD DEVICES

The passage of Bill 118 in 2009 requires the phase-out of all hand-held communication devices in transit vehicles by January 1, 2013. OPTA has continued to lobby against this provision and has been assured by two previous Ministers of Transportation that consideration would be given to extending the phase-in period, or rescinding it altogether, if acceptable wireless alternatives have not emerged in the marketplace in time to comply with this deadline. Officials in the Road User Safety branch of MTO are aware that no such alternatives are available at this time, and have also indicated that they will be holding discussions with affected stakeholders in the next few months to re-visit the policy and determine what will be required when the phase-in period expires. OPTA will remain engaged in these discussions and continue to call for a permanent exemption from the regulation for the transit industry.

PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

In December, OPTA and CUTA submitted comments to the Minister of Finance as part of the government's pre-budget consultations. The brief recognized the challenging fiscal situation that the Province faces, but called for:

- continued and dedicated provincial a tax funding;
- full exemption for transit under Bill 118 to require wireless communication devices;
- a review of the Development Charges Act;
- a review of how transportation-specific funding is allocated across and by all Provincial ministries.



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INTERCITY MOTOR COACH SERVICES REVIEW

Minister Bob Chiarelli announced in December that the MTO will be undertaking a review of intercity motor coach services. The review will be co-ordinated by Dipika Damerla, MPP for Mississauga East-Cooksville and Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister. The review may provide an opportunity to present ideas on topics such as the PVA requirements on licenses for routes which cross municipal boundaries and ancillary regulations such as the 1/3 Standees rule. If you are interested in learning more about this review, or want to be part of an OPTA working group on this issue, please contact OPTA's CEO, [Norm Cheesman](#).

SENIOR COMMERCIAL LICENSE RENEWAL REVIEW

In another announcement, MTO has indicated it will undertake a review of Senior Commercial Driver License Renewal requirements in the first quarter of 2012. The review will be lead by Vic Dhillon (MPP, Brampton West) and supported by officials in the Road User Safety branch of MTO. More details are expected shortly. Again, if you have specific questions about this review, or want to be included in any upcoming consultations, please contact [Norm Cheesman](#).

PERFORMANCE METRICS

OPTA intends to proceed with the updating of the Performance Review Guidelines which were initially developed by the MTO and the transit industry in the mid 1980's. Based on the premise that "you can't manage what you can't measure", the revised guidelines will incorporate principles of results-based accountability, and provide valuable metrics on topics which are considered critical to operating and managing a transit system, including operations, maintenance, service planning, administration, etc. The revised guidelines would not only represent a good self-audit tool, but they can also be used for training and developing staff. More details will be available shortly. If you have any questions regarding this undertaking, please contact [Norm Cheesman](#).

OTE CONFERENCE TOPICS

Believe it or not, OTE 2012 is only just over 2 months away – April 2-4. We have a great line up of conference programs again this year including topics such as:

- Best Practices in Performance Management
- Labour Relations Roundtable (by invitation)
- Maintenance Workshop
- Operational Reviews – Lessons Learned
- Bus Parts Inventory Management Program
- Cameras on Buses
- Electronic Fare Payment Systems
- Conventional Systems Workshop
- Specialized Systems Workshop

While fees will remain the same, one change we are introducing this year is that all conference registrations must be made on line. Hope you will join us. FMI, please visit: www.ote.ca.

URBAN TRANSPORTATION SUMMIT

The 10th Annual Urban Transportation Summit hosted by the Strategy Institute will take place in Toronto on March 6-7, 2012. OPTA members receive a 15% discount from the registration fee. For more information, please visit <http://www.urbantransportation.ca>.



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