



VIA Rail's 2026 Annual Public Meeting

Questions and Answers

This document contains answers to the most frequently asked questions received as part of VIA Rail Canada's 2026 Annual Public Meeting for the year ending December 31st, 2025.

We would like to thank the public for their participation and interest in VIA Rail.

Please note that questions of the same nature have been grouped together and that the grammar and syntax of the questions received have been corrected.

The audio recording of VIA Rail's 2026 Annual Public Meeting is available to listen to, in English and in French, on VIA Rail's YouTube channel.

We also invite you to consult VIA Rail's 2025 annual report, available in our [Media Centre](#).

Q. What are the next steps and timeline for the gradual return of service in the Gaspé region, and how will this plan meet the needs of communities in the Bas-Saint-Laurent and Gaspé regions?

VIA Rail is planning a gradual return of service in the Gaspé region that would initially include a daytime train between Québec City and New Carlisle, operating two to three times per week. The objective is to resume service no later than spring 2028. We are actively advancing the elements within our control, including operational planning and employee recruitment and training.

The return of train service cannot happen in isolation, as VIA Rail does not own the tracks east of Québec City or several of the stations between Matapédia and Gaspé. Implementing this plan will therefore depend on several external factors, including concluding service agreements with infrastructure owners, refurbishing stations and platforms, and confirming the funding required to operate the service.

The full return of service to Gaspé remains the only fully viable long-term option, both to meet VIA Rail's operational needs and the economic, tourism and social needs of the people of the Gaspé region. Achieving this will require a clear commitment and timeline from the provincial government for completing the work on the final section between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé.

VIA Rail will continue working with the Government of Quebec, infrastructure owners, communities and all other partners involved to advance this important project for the region.

It is still too early to confirm which stops will be served, but we can confirm that the needs of Bas-Saint-Laurent residents will be fully considered as part of our efforts.

Q. When will the new long-distance, regional and remote fleet enter service, when will it be fully deployed, and will it support increased frequencies or service on new routes?

On July 29, 2026, the Government of Canada committed \$1.95 billion to renew VIA Rail's locomotive fleet serving long-distance, regional and remote routes, with the acquisition of 45 hybrid battery-diesel locomotives from Stadler, the first hybrid passenger locomotives of their kind in North America.

The first locomotives are expected to enter commercial service in 2029, with deliveries and commissioning taking place progressively thereafter. The full locomotive fleet is expected to be delivered by 2032, in coordination with the introduction of the new passenger cars and the phased retirement of the existing equipment. The procurement process for the new passenger cars is ongoing.

The investment is essential to preserving these connections and improving the reliability, resilience and operational flexibility of the fleet.

Any future changes to service levels will depend on several factors, including the availability of equipment, infrastructure capacity, operating conditions, agreements with infrastructure owners and the required funding.

Q. When will VIA Rail resume carrying bicycles on Corridor trains?

In May 2026, VIA Rail reintroduced onboard bicycle service on four selected Corridor trains between Ottawa and Québec City. Cyclists can reserve a bike space for \$25 per direction on the following trains:

- Ottawa to Québec City: Trains 26 and 28
- Québec City to Ottawa: Trains 33 and 35

To ensure a smooth rollout, we have chosen to introduce the service gradually, beginning with a limited number of trains.

We will closely monitor operational performance and passenger demand as the service is reintroduced. Any future evolution will be guided by what we learn through this process.

At this time, there is no confirmed timeline for expanding the service to other routes.

Q. When will VIA Rail restore a third weekly round trip on the Canadian?

There is currently no confirmed date for restoring a third weekly round trip on the Canadian.

VIA Rail has procured 45 hybrid battery-diesel locomotives from Stadler as part of the renewal of its long-distance, regional and remote fleet. We are also working to procure the passenger cars that will operate with these locomotives on the Canadian, among other routes. The new fleet will improve equipment availability, reliability and operational flexibility within VIA Rail's control.

The new locomotives and passenger cars will be more reliable and better suited to the operational demands of long-distance service. They will help reduce disruptions related to aging equipment, support more predictable maintenance planning and give VIA Rail greater flexibility to assign equipment where it is needed. This will strengthen our ability to deliver the existing service consistently and respond more effectively to operational challenges, while creating a stronger foundation for considering future service adjustments.

Q. Does VIA Rail plan to add more options to its reservation system?

In 2025, VIA Rail launched a pilot allowing Business Class passengers to select their meals in advance. Following positive feedback, the feature was rolled out across all Corridor trains in 2026, improving passenger choice and onboard service planning. The reservation system also demonstrated its adaptability in the summer of 2025, when it allowed VIA Rail to implement the Canada Strong Pass quickly and at scale.

As passenger expectations and travel needs evolve, VIA Rail will continue assessing opportunities to make the booking experience more flexible and intuitive. Passenger feedback will help guide future improvements.

Q. What is VIA Rail doing to improve the variety of its onboard food and beverage offerings on the Winnipeg-Churchill service?

We recognize that, on a journey as long as Winnipeg-Churchill, the food and beverage offering is an important part of the passenger experience.

There is now a cook onboard the Winnipeg-Churchill train who prepares fresh, hot breakfasts and sandwiches for lunch. Dinner remains a heat-and-serve option. Additional light meals, snacks and drinks are also available for purchase onboard.

VIA Rail regularly reviews its onboard offerings based on passenger feedback and operational considerations, and we will continue assessing opportunities to improve the quality and variety of the food available.

Q. How is VIA Rail working with the federal government and railway infrastructure owners to improve on-time performance and create better operating conditions for passenger rail?

VIA Rail operates trains over approximately 12,500 kilometres of track across Canada, but owns only about 3% of the tracks on which it operates. As a result, VIA Rail's performance is significantly affected by factors outside its control, such as rail congestion, infrastructure access and operating restrictions.

However, we remain focused on the elements within our control, including on-time departures, mechanical reliability, and passenger care. With the commissioning of the new Corridor fleet now complete, our focus has shifted fully to stabilization, performance optimization and continuous improvement.

In 2025, negotiated speed tables helped mitigate the impacts of operating restrictions, and we continue to work with infrastructure owners and Transport Canada to improve on-time performance and identify a long-term solution that would allow VIA Rail to resume regular operations in the Corridor.

We will keep working with all parties involved to improve on-time performance and deliver the seamless travel experience Canadians deserve.