

Shuttle service for train passengers

Nelson Sergerie

GASPÉ - Following the success of the pilot project during the 2017 and 2018 holidays, the *Régie intermunicipale de transport Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine (RéGIM)* is setting up a summer shuttle service for users of the VIA Rail train between Campbellton and Gaspé.

This additional service will allow people who travel on board the Ocean train to or from Montreal to make the connection to Gaspé. “People were asking for it. We tried it during the holidays and it worked. We will also try it in the summer and we hope that it will work,” says the President of the RéGIM, Daniel Côté.

At the 2018 celebrations, 187 people had boarded the shuttle on the south side of the Gaspé Peninsula.

Mr. Côté wants a similar proportion for this summer, a hundred passengers a week. In service between June 21 and September 2, the shuttle will also offer an inter-regional service. A person who would like to take the service between Barachois and New Carlisle could reserve his place from the VIA Rail site, to facilitate travel, “as if we were taking the train,” says Mr. Côté.

Competing with Orléans Express

By adding this component to the summer shuttle, this intra-regional link will compete with the services of Orléans Express, which holds an exclusive bus passenger license on the Gaspé Peninsula. “Legal verifications have been done and there does not seem to be any problems on that side. If there is a problem, Keolis will raise its hand and we will contest.”

Difficult to establish an operating budget.

“We’re going to talk about a few thousand dollars. We have the amount of each shuttle, but we do not know if it will run every day. If there is more traffic, there will be more self-financing. We are talking about a budget of tens of thousands of dollars,” says Mr. Côté. The service is offered without assistance from Quebec since it does not fit into any program. It will be funded from the \$300,000 surplus from 2018.