

Major work underway on section 3 of the railroad

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GASPÉ - Preparatory work for the anticipated and long awaited refurbishment of the railway between Port-Daniel-Gascons and Gaspé began on September 5.

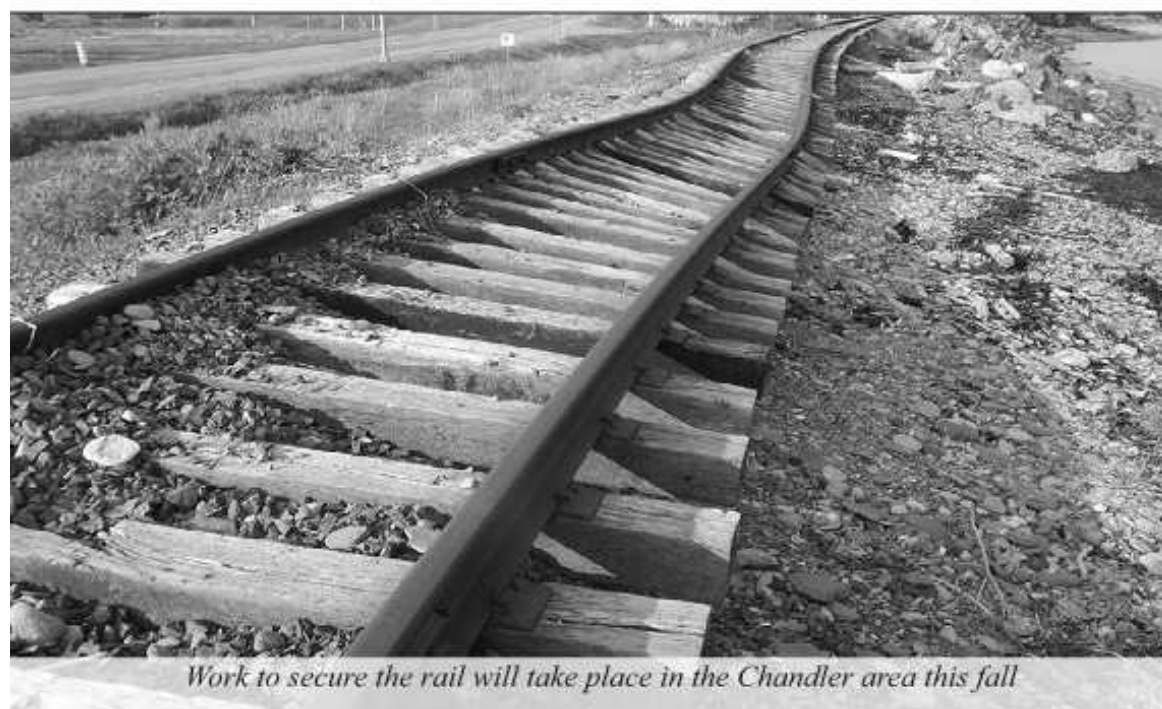
The government of Quebec points out that the work aims to protect the railway infrastructure from bad weather.

The Transport Ministry will initially carry out maintenance work on the protective rock barrier near the railway line in Chandler, which mainly consists of adding stones to fill in vulnerable spaces.

The areas targeted are along Chemin de la Plage and Rue de la Plage, between McGrath Avenue and Lake Duguay, where Bourg de Pabos Park and the Chenal canteen are located, an area notorious for coastal flooding during violent storms.

Major work will then be carried out on the 127 kilometres of track in 2024. In addition, more than 120 culverts will be replaced, a retaining wall will be repaired and three track relocations will be carried out.

This section of track has many challenges related to geological and coastal condi-



Work to secure the rail will take place in the Chandler area this fall

Photo: Taylor Main / Coalition des Gaspésiens for the return of the Via Rail passenger train

tions. Nearly 15 kilometres of the railway line runs along sandbanks, some segments of which have been submerged.

A project is currently underway to design and carry out an impact study on the coastal protection of this section to ensure the sustainability of the railway line.

"It will not be a walk in the park," mentions the Member of the National Assembly for Gaspé, Stéphane Sainte-Croix. "It's a big challenge. The engineering work is quite monumental. We have been hard at work for a little while in terms of analyses, and what it will take to move for-

ward and get through this project," adds the MNA.

"Some (stakeholders) were waiting to see it before believing it. We can now more than believe it!" says the mayor of Gaspé, Daniel Côté.

"The fact that the work is starting is a very good sign for the future. There will surely be challenges. Once the engineers and specialists go over the file and find solutions, we'll see how it unfolds," adds the mayor.

The Town of Gaspé has not yet pushed the economic development component following the arrival of the rail

line scheduled for 2026 in Gaspé.

"People were waiting for the work to start before positioning themselves. There wasn't any lineup at the door, but the fact of seeing the work being carried out, it should arouse more enthusiasm. We have already postponed and refused projects at a certain time because we could not guarantee the railway. There are promoters who have deserted the area but now we have an additional tool to attract them," says the mayor. In June, Quebec announced in Gaspé an overall investment of \$872

million to refurbish the rail line between Matapédia and Gaspé, while affirming that the train will return to Gaspé in 2026.

This is the third and final section of the major project to resume freight service between Matapédia and Gaspé. On this section alone, \$518 million has been set aside by the government to achieve this.

Work continues to complete section 2 between Caplan and Port-Daniel-Gascons.

Building a retaining wall and moving the track in New Carlisle and Paspébiac could cost \$38.4 million.

The Ministry of Transport is still validating Pomerleau's bid before awarding the contract for the project, which was valued between \$40 million and \$45 million.

A call for tenders is underway to move the railway line ten metres inland to deal with erosion and a potential rock slide in New Richmond.

The ministry does not want to give a price range, so as not to interfere with the process. Submissions will open on September 15.

Another tender has also been launched for the repair of 12 culverts on section 2, a project estimated between \$20 and \$25 million.