

VIA Rail reservation system no longer offers the RéGÎM shuttle

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The overhaul of the VIA Rail reservation system is forcing the Gaspé Peninsula Intermunicipal Transportation Board (RéGÎM) to abandon its summer shuttle that transported travellers to the train in Campbellton, New Brunswick.

The RéGÎM Board of Directors is not taking this decision lightly. "We are very sad to announce this withdrawal of service. The decision was made following an announcement by VIA Rail that there would be no more partnership. VIA Rail changed its reservation system at the start of the year and there is no longer any room for connection partners," explains RéGÎM director Marie-Andrée Pichette.

The RéGÎM would have to develop a reservation platform to make links with VIA Rail clientele, which would have been a complex task.

"There was a lot at stake and a lot of complexity for a small team like ours," says Pichette about developing another software. She adds that the shuttle was operating at a significant deficit.

The RéGÎM is still open to reconsidering its decision, but VIA Rail mentions in a press release that there is no possi-



The RéGÎM VIA Rail shuttle will not be running this summer

Photo: N. Sergerie

bility of integration.

"We are launching a new dispatch system at the Transit Authority in the next few weeks. We will see how our system could support the development of a component that could take reservations from VIA Rail in the future. But the decision was announced too recently that we didn't have time to develop the system for this summer," says the director, who says there is still a possibility for a shuttle during holidays or next summer.

The suspension of this service adds to the difficulties for people travelling to and from the region.

"These are major challenges. This is a major con-

cern, both at the rail level, as well as for the bus and air travel. What we want is to have as many interregional means of transportation as possible. We continue to work to get VIA Rail to Gaspé," says the president of the Table of Prefects for the Gaspé Peninsula, Mathieu Lapointe, who also points out that the table works on the transportation issue almost daily.

The shuttle was created in 2017 to replace the train that has not been running since 2011 to Gaspé and 2013 to New Carlisle. A Christmas shuttle has also existed for a few years now.

Last year, the shuttle had 76 departures and transported 400 passengers.