

Municipalities and Railways Continue Working Together

MOU is key to improving municipal planning, developing new techniques for mitigating noise vibrations, and enhancing public safety around railway operations.

OTTAWA, December 30, 2008 - The Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Railway Association of Canada (RAC) have agreed to extend their Memorandum of Understanding, dealing with noise, vibration, safety and other proximity management issues, for an open-ended term. The agreement will be reviewed every two years and potential changes will be mutually arranged.

The new agreement was announced today by Jean Perrault, President of FCM and Mayor of Sherbrooke, Que., and Cliff Mackay, President and CEO of the RAC. FCM's membership of more than 1,775 municipalities represents 90 per cent of the Canadian population, while the RAC represents the railway industry, consisting of 55 freight and passenger railways in Canada. The railways operate some 775 trains per day. They carry 75 per cent of surface freight and 68 million passengers and commuters annually.

The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators (CAMA), representing city managers and administrators, has also joined the initiative's proximity steering committee.

"It is in everyone's interest to negotiate appropriate relationships between railways, cities and communities, to plan ahead and resolve problems before they occur, and to develop mechanisms for resolving unanticipated issues," said Mr. Perrault.

Mr. Mackay welcomed the initiative as ahead of its time. "We have demonstrated a willingness to work together and an ability to solve problems that meet everyone's needs," he said. "We know, from experience, that people can work together in the common interest."

The original MOU was signed in May 2003. Three joint committees have been working on the issues: to improve municipal planning, to develop new techniques for mitigating noise vibrations, and to enhance public safety around railway operations.

The organizations maintain an extensive FCM/ RAC data store and website at www.proximityissues.ca that provides information and content on proximity complaints and municipal/ railway contacts. The site is visited by 365,000 people annually.

The new co-chair of the Proximity Steering Committee is Councillor Merrill Henderson of Moncton, representing FCM. He succeeded Sharon Hartwell, mayor of Telkwa, B.C. this fall. Two new

members recently also joined the committee, Mayor Richard Walton, District of North Vancouver, B.C., and Reeve Tim Stone of Saddle Hills County, Alberta.

About the Railway Association of Canada (RAC):

The RAC represents virtually all freight and passenger railways operating in Canada today, large and small. They operate some 775 trains a day, carry 75 per cent of surface freight and 68 million commuters and passengers annually.

About the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM):

FCM is the national voice of municipal governments, established in 1901, representing the interests of municipalities on policy and program matters that fall within federal jurisdiction. With more than 1,775 members representing 90 per cent of the Canadian population, FCM members include Canada's largest cities, small urban and rural communities, and 18 provincial and territorial municipal associations.

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