

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ontario and Michigan Leaders Unite Behind International High Performance Rail Vision

Municipal leaders call for federal investment to connect Toronto, Southwestern Ontario, Windsor, Detroit and the broader Great Lakes economy

LONDON, ONTARIO – June 18, 2026 – Municipal leaders from across Southwestern Ontario joined transportation, economic development, and government partners from Ontario and Michigan today in London to advance a shared vision for International High Performance Rail connecting Toronto, Southwestern Ontario, Windsor and Detroit.

The meeting brought together mayors from communities along the Toronto-Windsor corridor, representatives from the State of Michigan and the City of Detroit, the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, and other stakeholders to discuss how enhanced passenger rail service can strengthen economic competitiveness, improve mobility, support trade and tourism, and better connect one of North America's most important innovation corridors.

The coalition is calling on the Government of Canada to make enhanced passenger rail service in Southwestern Ontario a national infrastructure priority by:

- Approving funding in Budget 2026 to construct the track improvements, station upgrades, and a joint border security facility for the Detroit-Windsor Cross-Border Train Service Connection;
- Committing to the development of an enhanced passenger rail corridor connecting Toronto, Oakville, Hamilton (Aldershot), Brantford, Woodstock, London, Chatham-Kent, and Windsor enabling safer, more reliable and faster passenger train service by:
 - improving existing rail infrastructure, signals and stations;
 - adding additional track capacity, including longer sidings and additional main line to allow freight trains to pull over along the corridor, enabling passenger trains to maintain speed and pass freight trains where possible; and
 - introducing a mechanism for passenger rail prioritization through legislation
- Ensuring rail improvements are aligned within existing transportation corridors to protect agricultural land and rural communities; and

- Working immediately with municipalities and the Province of Ontario through the Major Projects Office to establish a delivery plan.

Southwestern Ontario is home to more than seven million residents, 3.4 million jobs, world-class research institutions, advanced manufacturing clusters, and a growing technology economy. However, passenger rail service continues to face reliability and capacity challenges due to aging infrastructure and shared freight corridors.

VIA Rail has already invested in new trainsets for the Southwestern Ontario corridor capable of speeds up to 200 km/h, improving comfort and future capacity. However, without investment in track and signal upgrades, trains cannot operate near their full potential. Frequent delays, speed restrictions, and limited service reliability - largely caused by shared use of corridors with infrastructure owners - continue to create barriers to mobility and economic growth.

The situation is getting worse. VIA Rail's on-time performance in the Québec City–Windsor corridor fell from 72% in Q1 2024 to just 30% in Q1 2025 due to operational restrictions and congestion on CN-owned tracks. VIA Rail trains are increasingly forced to slow down, stop, and wait for freight traffic to pass, undermining passenger confidence and reducing the competitiveness of rail travel.

Leaders emphasized that improved passenger rail service would help reduce highway congestion, lower emissions, strengthen labour mobility, support tourism, and improve connections between Ontario's innovation economy and emerging opportunities in Michigan and the U.S. Midwest.

The meeting also highlighted growing momentum for improved cross-border rail service between Windsor and Detroit, including ongoing collaboration between Canadian and American partners to restore seamless passenger rail connections between Toronto, Detroit, and Chicago. With significant rail improvement projects envisioned between Chicago and Detroit and between Québec City and Toronto, investments need to be made now to advance high performance rail between these two strategic transportation projects.

Mayors agreed that high performance rail in Southwestern Ontario will support the Federal Government's nation-building project ALTO, bringing high speed rail to the Québec City-Toronto corridor.

Participants agreed to continue working together to advance a coordinated advocacy strategy with federal and provincial partners, transportation agencies, business leaders, post-secondary institutions, and economic development organizations.

Leaders also committed to further engagement in the months ahead, including meetings with federal decision-makers and additional stakeholder discussions focused on building support for International High Performance Rail throughout the Great Lakes region.

Quotes

Mayor Josh Morgan, City of London

"Today's meeting demonstrates that communities across Southwestern Ontario and our partners in Michigan are speaking with one voice. International High Performance Rail is a nation-building opportunity that will connect people, talent, businesses and institutions across one of North America's most important economic corridors. We are ready to work with the federal and provincial governments to move this project forward."

Mayor Drew Dilkens, City of Windsor

"The Windsor-Detroit gateway is Canada's most important trade crossing and a critical connection to the U.S. economy. Advancing enhanced passenger rail service and restoring seamless cross-border rail connections will strengthen economic ties, improve mobility, and support growth on both sides of the border."

Mayor Darrin Canniff, Municipality of Chatham-Kent

"Communities throughout Southwestern Ontario need transportation infrastructure that supports growth, investment and workforce mobility. Enhanced passenger rail service will help connect residents to opportunities while ensuring smaller and mid-sized communities remain part of Ontario's economic future."

Mayor Kevin Davis, City of Brantford

"Reliable and frequent passenger rail service is essential to building a more connected and competitive region. Investments in rail infrastructure will help strengthen economic development, reduce congestion and provide residents with more transportation choices."

Mayor Jerry Acchione, City of Woodstock

"Woodstock sits at the heart of Southwestern Ontario's manufacturing and logistics economy. Improving rail service throughout the corridor will create new opportunities for businesses, students and workers while strengthening connections between our communities."

Mayor Rob Burton, Town of Oakville

"Modern passenger rail infrastructure is essential to supporting population growth, economic competitiveness and sustainability. Municipalities along this corridor are united in our call for strategic investment that delivers benefits for residents and businesses alike."

Deputy Mayor Paul Ainslie, City of Toronto

"Toronto's prosperity is closely connected to the success of communities throughout Southwestern Ontario. Enhanced passenger rail service will strengthen regional connectivity, support economic growth and create a more integrated transportation network for the future."

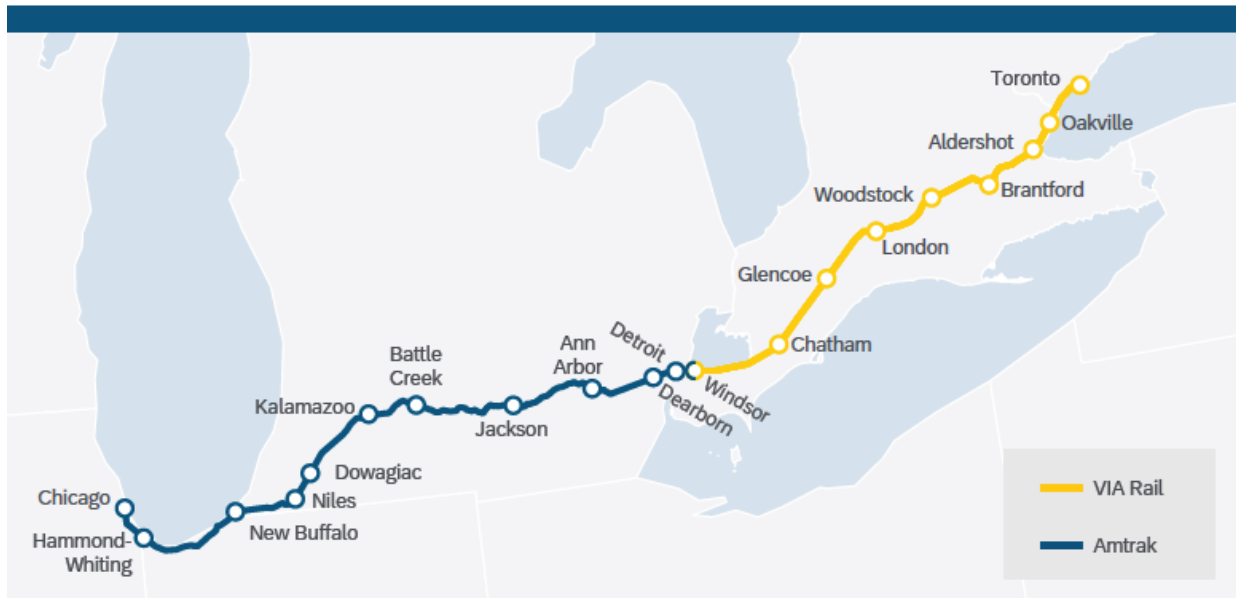
About International High Performance Rail

International High Performance Rail is a vision for faster, more frequent and more reliable passenger rail service connecting Toronto, Oakville, Hamilton, Brantford, Woodstock, London, Chatham-Kent, Windsor and Detroit. The initiative seeks to strengthen economic competitiveness, support cross-border mobility, connect research and innovation hubs, and create a more sustainable transportation future for Southwestern Ontario and the Great Lakes region.

About Toronto–Windsor–Detroit–Chicago Intercity Passenger Rail Service Initiative

The project will link Amtrak and VIA Rail Canada services in Windsor, ON, leveraging two existing intercity passenger rail services that are separated by a 14.5 km gap. The proposed service would address population and traffic increases and support economic growth. The project provides a new passenger rail connection from Toronto and Windsor to Detroit and Chicago. Additionally, from Chicago, passengers can access Amtrak's vast national network with connecting services to 35 US states.

Project Map



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