

## Opening Session

*John A. Bonsall, Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission — presiding*

---

### Conference Introduction

*John A. Bonsall*

*Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission*

---



It is a pleasure to welcome you to Ottawa and the Sixth National Conference on High-Occupancy Vehicle Systems. As with previous HOV conferences, we have a multitude of sessions covering different aspects of HOV facilities on the program. What is slightly different about the conference this year is the emphasis on that ultimate high-occupancy vehicle—the bus. We are very proud of the system of exclusive busways here in Ottawa and we are pleased to have the opportunity to host the conference. You will have the chance to see the different facilities during the tour tomorrow. I would also like to encourage each of you to use the bus pass included in your conference registration package for riding the system when you have some extra time.

I also want to invite you to attend the opening of the first freeway bus-only lane in Ontario on Wednesday morning. This facility is a shoulder bus lane on Highway 17 and the grand opening will take place this Wednesday morning. A bus will depart from the hotel to take you to the ceremony and will return in time for the final conference sessions.

I would like to thank a number of people for their help in organizing the conference. First, Rich Cunard and the TRB staff did an excellent job making all the necessary arrangements with the hotel. Second, I would like to thank Katie Turnbull for her assistance in organizing the

technical program for the conference. Finally, I would like to recognize my staff for their help in setting up the local tours. I hope all of you will enjoy the conference and the Ottawa area.

### Conference Welcome

*Peter Clark*

*Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission*

*Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton*

---



Welcome to Ottawa, the capital city of Ontario. As Chairman of the Ottawa-Carleton Regional Transit Commission, it is a pleasure to have the opportunity to welcome you to the Sixth National Conference on HOV Systems and to Ottawa. We are pleased to be hosting the conference and to have you see the Transitway system here in Ottawa.

The Ottawa-Carleton area has a population of approximately 700,000 people. We are proud of our Transitway, bus system, bikeways, greenbelt, and roadway system. Currently, approximately 13 miles of the Ottawa Transitway have been put into operation, along with some ten miles of priority bus lanes. The Transitway has allowed us to gain more productivity out of our buses. With the amount of service we are providing today, we would need 145 more buses if we had not built the Transitway.

The Ottawa Transitway has also been effective in attracting new passengers and maintaining existing riders. Seven out of ten people who work downtown take the bus.

Further, 30 percent of the peak-hour commuters in major travel corridors ride the bus. We also have the highest per-capita ridership of any transit system serving a region of this size in North America. On weekdays, the Transitway carries some 200,000 passenger trips.

Benefits of the Transitway include postponing the need for new and expanded roads, reducing pollution, savings in bus capital expenditures, and reducing operating costs for line-haul services. Public support for the Transitway is strong. The system has also generated worldwide interest. In the last month alone, we have had visitors from Japan, China, Hong Kong, and from cities in the United States and Canada.

Within three years we will have another three miles of the Transitway in operation and an additional ten miles are in the planning stage. On Wednesday we will be opening the first freeway bus lane in Ottawa. This is a four-mile bus-only lane on the shoulder of Highway 17. This lane is expected to carry some 4,000 bus riders during the morning peak hour.

Again, welcome to Ottawa-Carleton. I hope you have a productive conference and an enjoyable stay in the area.

## **Canadian Perspective on HOV Facilities**

*Alan Ian Cormier*

*Canadian Urban Transit Association*



Thank you very much for inviting me to participate in your conference on HOV facilities. I would like to provide a Canadian perspective on HOV applications. Because of my role in public transportation, the overview will be from a transit perspective.

Let me first take a moment to provide you with an update on the general state of public transit in Canada today. No doubt you are all aware of the recession that has had North America in its grip for the last few years. Urban transit has not been spared from the effects of the economic slowdown. Transit ridership in many areas has unfortunately been stagnant or declining over the last couple of years—notably in well established urban centers of central Canada, such as Toronto and Hamilton.

However, we maintain an optimistic view for the future. It is towards the future that we are developing plans to increase transit ridership and transit's share of the total urban travel market. It will take the combined and coordinated efforts of many groups to accomplish this.

The Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) represents providers of urban transit services, suppliers, and related organizations in Canada. Our mission is to promote the role of urban transit in enhancing mobility, and to support our members in the fulfillment of their mandate.

CUTA has undertaken a major effort in this direction with its "modal shift to transit" project. The objective of this recently completed study was to identify short- and long-term measures that could be implemented by all levels of government—and by the transit industry itself—to