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Builder of Ottawa LRT sets new handover date of Aug. 16

**By Beatrice Britneff • Global News**

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An image of two Ottawa LRT trains at Bayview station. **City of Ottawa**



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After the manufacturer of Ottawa's LRT trains met its July 7 deadline to fix outstanding issues with the vehicles, the builder of the [Confederation Line](#) told OC Transpo it will hand over the delayed light-rail system to the city on August 16, Ottawa Mayor [Jim Watson](#) said on Wednesday.

This new, revised deadline — the fourth official one set to date — leaves the city on track to open the \$2.1-billion Confederation Line to Ottawa passengers in September, the mayor said during an update at city hall.

READ MORE: [RTG to hand over reins to Ottawa LRT by early August, service to launch in September, mayor says](#)

The Rideau Transit Group (RTG), the consortium building the 13-stop, east-west LRT system, has missed several deadlines to hand over the train to the city. The Confederation Line is now over a year late.

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"I feel much more confident today with the news about the vehicles, about the dates that we've established that will allow customers to hop on and hop off the trains in September," Watson, who chairs the city's finance and economic committee, told reporters after Wednesday's meeting.

OC Transpo general manager John Manconi said all the "critical" issues with the trains that he was concerned about have been addressed and any minor, remaining issues can be handled through "normal maintenance regimes."

Manconi told the committee that RTG intends to file its second application for substantial completion in the next 10 days. (The consortium's first application was rejected.)

Substantial completion means construction of the system is essentially done. Achieving that milestone would permit RTG to kickstart a mandatory 12-consecutive-day trial run mimicking the entire service.

RTG likely has four-week period to complete trial run

If there's a major issue during that 12-day period — like trains stopping on the tracks — RTG must restart the trial run, Manconi said. The builder won't be forced to set back the clock for a problem like a minor issue with a door, for example, he told reporters.

"They have to get an A on that exam," Manconi said during his presentation to the committee.

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The current timeline leaves RTG with about a four-week buffer period to complete and pass the trial run, assuming it achieves substantial completion.

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Asked whether he feels confident that RTG can accomplish the trial run in that period of time, Watson said he believes so.

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Manconi said a trial run “review team” — made up of RTG members, consultants, the city’s independent certifier and the city’s safety auditor — must sign off on the trial run before RTG can hand the city the keys to the system.

Manconi said OC Transpo won't provide daily updates during the trial run period but will inform council members once RTG has passed the test, either before or on August 16.

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"If something is slipping with the [handover date], we will again update," Manconi said.

Specific launch date will be announced four weeks in advance, mayor says

After receiving the keys to the system, OC Transpo needs up about four weeks to prepare the line for launch day. The [City of Ottawa](#) will announce a specific launch date four weeks ahead of time, Watson said.

Once RTG achieves substantial completion, the city will pay the consortium a payment of \$59 million that it has withheld due to the delays. RTG will receive its final payment of \$202 million when it hands over the system, minus the costs the city has incurred with the delay.

RTG is reportedly contesting those deductions.

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If the builder misses the new August 16 deadline, it will be fined another \$1 million, Manconi said.

Ahead of launch day, OC Transpo will push out information about the upcoming bus service changes and using the O-Train both online and in mailouts to residents, councillors heard.

Manconi reiterated that the current bus routes will run continue to run for three weeks after the LRT launches as “an insurance policy” during the major bus-to-rail transition and in case there are any major issues with the train service.

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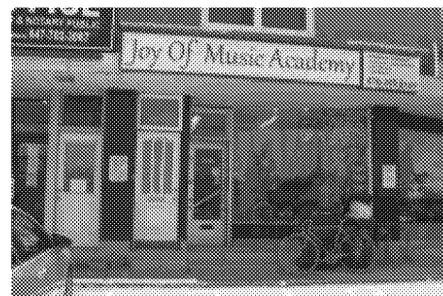
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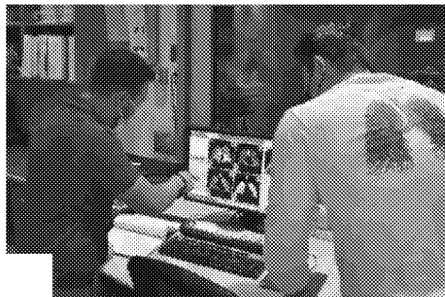
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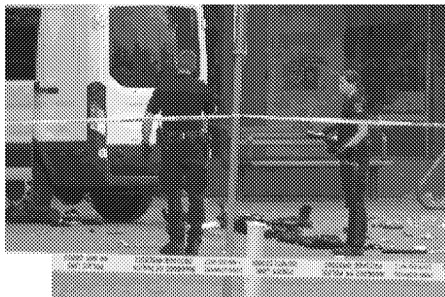
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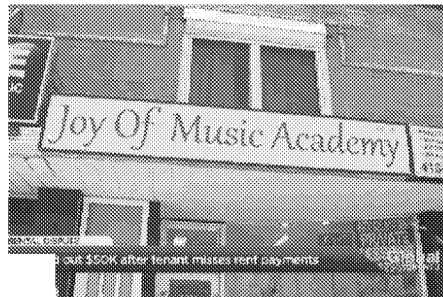
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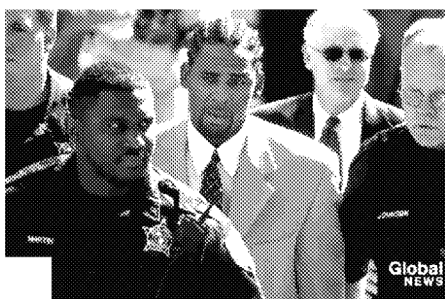
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