

## International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

November 17, 2016

Meeting packet available at: [theIMTC.com/meetings](http://theIMTC.com/meetings)

### Meeting location

The meeting was held at the Whatcom Council of Governments, Bellingham, WA.

### Meeting attendance

**Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Brad Valentine, Dan Bubas, Ryan Vanderstar, Derek Collins); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain, Bob Wilson, Lethal Coe); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson); **US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm, Craig Hope, Kenneth Williams, Phillip Stanford); **City of Blaine** (Bill Bullock); **Congresswoman Susan DelBene's Office** (Kaylee Galloway, Phoebe Millsap); **BC Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Lindsay Samson); **City of Surrey** (Kristen Tiede); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke)

### Current event updates

Melissa Fanucci gave an update on the booth status data integration project, which is a data sharing agreement allowing BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] to use booth data feeds from US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] for more accurate border wait-time reporting. Developers are getting the project started, and in 6 months it will hopefully be completed, she said. Ms. Fanucci also informed the group that, due to bridge construction at the Peace Bridge crossing between Buffalo/Niagara, CBP border user fees must be pre-paid prior to crossing, and e-manifest must be filed, including those for empties. These new temporary changes will demonstrate how possible future rule changes may impact the movement of goods.

Hugh Conroy said that he spoke with Jim Patton of US CBP at the recent Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting. US CBP is working on another similar feed that they may prefer to use as an input for wait-time calculations. He also mentioned that US CBP is looking at archiving border wait-times similar to the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse.

Bill Bullock reported that the city of Blaine is in the design phase for their Hughes Ave reconstruction project. Hughes Ave is a secondary truck route to the Pacific Highway border crossing from I-5 exit 274. The project will realign the intersection of Hughes Ave and Peace Portal Dr, providing a better turning angle for tractor-trailers. Phase 1 of construction will occur in 2017. Mr. Bullock also said that the city's Boblett St

channelization project will go to construction in 2018 or 2019. A signalization improvement at Boblett St-SR 543 will be a later Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] project.

Jim Kohnke reported that two border-related resolutions were passed at the BC Chamber of Commerce Annual General Meeting [AGM] in May, which were a lumber agreement and a resolution addressing the truck driver shortage and driver training. Mr. Kohnke said that he can provide notes on these resolutions.

Kristen Tiede of the city of Surrey talked about a Canadian resident near Peace Arch Park who voiced interest in the one-way street paralleling the Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] facility at Douglas being 2-way for bicyclists. The Surrey road turns into a CBSA road, she said.

Lindsey Samson said that the BC Trucking Association [BCTA] is interested in getting more details on the US CBP Lynden commercial crossing and the need for capital investment to make it a full port, not just permit-only. Regarding border prepay at Peace Bridge, BCTA is also wondering if the process is online-only and if cash payment will eventually be phased out. Kenneth Williams said that there are not talks at US CBP regarding Lynden becoming a full commercial port. He also said that there are currently no plans to make the port 24 hours. Brad Valentine added that CBSA is not looking to open the adjacent Aldergrove port as a 24-hour service right now.

Derek Collins of CBSA reported that at the Douglas crossing, three western lanes are closed for RFID installation. By Christmas they hope to have two RFID lanes operational. CBSA is also implementing counters for RFID cards near inspection booths, similar to counters at adjacent US CBP facilities. Mr. Collins also said that he was recently contacted by a Whatcom County auditor about having a ballot box in Pt. Roberts and the ability to transport ballots through Canada between Pt. Roberts and mainland US. He said they were successful.

Brad Valentine said that other port work will occur at CBSA facilities next year. One project will be canopy restoration at the Douglas crossing. Mr. Valentine said that at the January IMTC meeting, there will be more of an update on the Pacific Highway master plan. Development of large scale imaging at Pacific Highway is well underway, he added, and soon they'll be able to conduct full scans of truck cargo. There is funding on CBSA's end for the pedestrian plan at Pacific Highway. Melissa Fanucci added that they will have to get updates from BC MoTI and the General Services Administration [GSA] for their portions of desired route improvements.

Kaylee Galloway spoke to the recent US elections. She said she hopes to use these updates from agencies so that Representative DelBene's office can act as a liaison to her constituents regarding border related information.

Phil Stanford told the group that the roof was recently repaired at US CBP's Lynden facility.

Kenneth Williams said that US CBP recently hosted a headquarters group to look at cargo wait-times and discuss ideas to have a system to better track that. The group said that this region does a better job at tracking border wait-times than others. Mr. Williams also said that in 2017 they hope to expand passenger traffic capacity by 2 to 4 lanes at Pacific Highway. The original cost estimate was much lower than a recently updated estimate by the General Services Agency [GSA], so the project is on hold until funding is better resolved. In 2017 Mr. Williams said that one of his goals is to look at CBP-owned port facilities (ARRA ports) in Washington in an effort to redevelop them with new technology. Many of the facilities in question are very old, some of them historical buildings. He explained that CBP has put in a contract this year with GSA where

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GSA will maintain CBP's booth infrastructure to a standard, but they will not necessarily update it with improving technology. Sumas and Lynden are also ports where the dated booth technology would likely need to be updated through redevelopment.

Kenneth Williams introduced Craig Hope, who is taking Mr. William's old job as US CBP Assistant Area Port Director for trade. Mr. Hope worked in Arizona for 16 years, and has also worked around the country. He said that he values open dialogue and looks forward to working with IMTC partners.

Mr. Williams reported that Cynthia Ralko has moved back to El Paso, Texas. John Dahm is taking her position permanently as Assistant Area Port Director for passenger operations. Mr. Dahm has been with US CBP for 19 years. He said that he is interested in technology, especially innovations like RFID that seek to make the border more efficient.

Hugh Conroy told the group that the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] has been looking at HERE data for traffic congestion performance measurement as part of new US federal requirements for MPOs that are slowly being rolled out in regulations. The HERE data could be a source for performance measures for IMTC, Mr. Conroy said. Todd Carlson mentioned that this data will also help with WSDOT's Corridor Sketch Initiative.

Jaymes McClain informed the group that WCOG has access to recent aerial photos of the border ports. Under the agreement with the company that provides the aerial photography, WCOG can distribute orthogonal aerials under the assumption that third-parties use the photos for internal use only.

Todd Carlson reviewed WSDOT's Corridor Sketch Initiative. The process does not have a project list and does not identify funding, but it gets the ball rolling for certain transportation issues and geographic areas of concern. Data and performance measurement are at forefront of the project, he said. Mr. Carlson also announced that a data-sharing memorandum of understanding [MOU] between WSDOT and WCOG is now official. This MOU formalizes the agreement of WSDOT sharing loop detector-based data with WCOG for archiving on the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse.

Ryan Vanderstar said that CBSA is continuing its outreach to promote the new Aldergrove commercial port. At the Abbotsford-Huntingdon port, Mr. Vanderstar said that in January they will be repaving the secondary inspection area, which will affect traffic flow. LED signage will also be installed for all lanes. They are seeing continued commercial growth at Abbotsford-Huntingdon, and they are observing backups southbound towards Sumas, which is affecting BC Hwy 11. Mr. Vanderstar also commented that the Abbotsford Airport is seeing growth, which now being serviced by a new airline, NewLeaf.

Dan Bubas reported that large scale imaging equipment at CBSA's Pacific Highway facility is taking shape. The completion date is set for the end of March 2017. They will have a testing and training period. The imaging won't scan all commercial trucks crossing the border – it will most likely only scan trucks sent to secondary inspection. The new system will support radiation portals, which look for elevated levels of radiation. Mr. Bubas also said that next year they will have another wave of e-manifest implementation. The pre-arrival information that they get from e-manifests will be analyzed by a centralized targeting unit at CBSA headquarters, called the National Targeting Center [NTC], instead of at the local commercial CBSA ports. Referrals will now come from the NTC with regards to e-manifest cargo information, but PIL-booth inspection agents will retain the ability to refer trucks to secondary as well. This will only be for commercial

vehicles, not passenger vehicles. Mr. Bubas said that this transition will start at smaller ports first early next year, with the Pacific ports phasing in later in the summer.

Hugh Conroy said that the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] is wrapping up the write-up for the recently completed border freight operations study. They would like to conduct more interviews with individual carriers and gather more industry feedback on border related topics. He also said they will be finishing up reporting on the simulation software they have used for several IMTC applications, such as modeling customs staffing levels and testing scenarios for the RFID business case. In 2017, WCOG will continue working with the IMTC group on regional border master planning efforts, Mr. Conroy said. He also spoke to the recent announcement by the Canadian federal government regarding large infrastructure budgets over the next decade and the possibility for the IMTC group to inform some of the decision making for those infrastructure improvements that may occur Cascade Gateway. Mr. Conroy said that the memorandum of cooperation recently signed between the Washington Governor and British Columbia Premier focuses on supporting technological innovations between the state and the province and a recommitment to coordinated transportation planning. More light will be shed on the memorandum and its impacts in the new year.

## **Recent release of the US-Canada Border Infrastructure Investment Plan (BIIP) 3.0**

Hugh Conroy reviewed the third annual US-Canada Border Infrastructure Investment Plan [BIIP], which was unveiled in August. The BIIP helps identify infrastructure investment needs at border facilities between the US and Canada. The plan is something that the IMTC group can better tie into with border master planning efforts. Mr. Conroy extracted portions of the BIIP that concern the Cascade Gateway region and attached them in the meeting packet.

Hugh Conroy commented on the disparity between US and Canada import trade values at the Point Roberts-Boundary Bay crossing, where Canadian import values were seven times greater than for the US in 2014. Brad Valentine surmised that the Pt Roberts “mailbox effect” probably accounts for this disparity. Dan Bubas said that packages that are picked up in Pt Roberts by Canadians are supposed to be declared when crossing back into Canada. Ken Williams added that there is a new mail facility in Pt Roberts, adding to the theme of Pt Roberts being a popular place for Lower Mainland Canadians to ship packages to. Melissa Fanucci commented on the similar dynamic in Sumas, which is now the 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest pedestrian crossing on the US-Canadian border.

Mr. Conroy continued reviewing the BIIP projects, touching on highlighted texts and side comments added for the interest of the group. Under the Sumas-Abbotsford-Huntingdon section, he examined the proposed infrastructure projects. Ken Williams of US CBP said that he hadn’t heard of discussions for a proposed stand-alone CBP commercial building. A proposed extension of the NEXUS lane south farther into Sumas was also news to Todd Carlson of WSDOT.

## **Recap of November 2nd-3rd TBWG meeting**

Hugh Conroy reviewed the recent Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting that he attended in early November. The meeting took place in Ottawa, ON. He reported that there has been some turnover

at CBSA headquarters. Scott Taymun from CBSA's Border Infrastructure Renewal expressed interest in data driven efforts at the border and regional cross-border forums like the IMTC.

Regarding CBP's new donations acceptance program for capital projects, Mr. Conroy learned that those projects have to be in the US, barring a potential tie-in to CBP preclearance strategies in Canada. FHWA's reviewed scenario planning tool developed with Transport Canada will support an interactive online tool for generalizing forecasts for North American trade and travel. There was a lot of discussion on preclearance but not much in the way of new developments.

Ken Williams said that he is continually pushing the case for Vehicle and Cargo Inspection Systems [VACIS] for rail as a preclearance strategy. The railroad itself provides for transportation in both directions, and VACIS implementation should be considered, he said. Mr. Williams explained that a joint US CBP-CBSA VACIS facility could be a good fit in the Cascade Gateway.

Jim Philips from Canadian/American Border Trade Alliance has been advocating for the RFID business case that was developed through the IMTC group, Mr. Conroy said. The decision to produce companion RF passport cards would be up to Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada [IRCC], which is the new Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC]. The Beyond the Border [BtB] Forward Plan made mention of promoting greater use of RF-enabled documents in the cross-border transportation sphere, though without mention of a specific strategy.

There was general discussion on the benefits of RF-enabled traveler documents as well as the need for large-scale distribution of RFID cards into the non-NEXUS traveler population to maximize the system benefits.

John Dahm explained US CBP's new initiative for filling out I-94s online. Landed immigrants and tourists in Canada are required to fill out an I-94 and pay a fee to enter the US. Historically, when those individuals drive through CBP inspection, they are referred to secondary inspection and must enter the facility lobby and fill out the I-94, submit biometrics and pay the fee. Now they can complete Form I-94, and pay the associated fee before crossing the border. They will still have to be referred to secondary to submit biometrics and receive their I-94. Mr. Dahm said that CBP is trying to move away from data entry by inspection agents in primary and secondary inspection and move to more automated strategies.

Hugh Conroy reported that Transport Canada [TC] and FHWA would like the next TBWG meeting to occur in Bellingham. The event will be held at Western Washington University [WWU]. Ken Williams expressed interest in adding an agenda item; a roundtable discussion of potential projects, such as the possibility of implementing a facility north of a main CBP port facility where CBP officers can process travelers' I-94s before they reach a border inspection facility. This would reduce the amount of foot traffic in main CBP port lobbies and free up inspection agents for other duties.

## **Border Freight Operations study summary analysis of ending cash collection**

Jaymes McClain presented some data coming out of the Border Freight Operations study. The focus of the analysis was US CBP inspections that involved cash collections.

The number of inspections involving cash collection at the CBP ports Pacific Highway, Lynden, and Sumas averaged 13 percent. This is for a survey period of 4 days at each port in late June-early July. Breaking out commercial vehicles by country of origin, 10 percent of Canadian vehicles paid in cash versus 15 percent of US vehicles. Of observed vehicle types, 36 percent of “Cars/SUVs/Vans/Pickups” crossing southbound paid in cash, the highest ratio of all vehicle types. It was observed that 62 percent of automobile imports involved an inspection with cash collection.

Mr. McClain did a quick analysis of average inspection time difference between inspections that do and do not involve cash collection. Primary inspections of vehicles paying in cash took on average 2.1 minutes to complete versus 1.2 minutes for non-cash inspections. That is a 43 percent decrease in inspection duration. Doing an analysis of cumulative minutes of inspection that were observed while the survey was being conducted, Mr. McClain calculated that ending cash collections will cut system wait-times by about 9 percent.

**The meeting was adjourned at 12 PM**