

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

February 18, 2016

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

### Meeting location

The meeting was held at Aldergrove Port-of-Entry, Aldergrove, British Columbia.

### Meeting attendance

**B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]** (Abid Sivic, Simon Leung); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Bernie Pitura, Brad Valentine); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson); **Transport Canada [TC]** (Chris Hoff); **City of Surrey** (Kristen Tiede); **US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (Kenneth Williams, Cynthia Ralko, Phillip Stanford); **Canadian Consulate Seattle** (Kevin Cook); **BC Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Greg Kolesniak); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **Township of Langley** (Richard Welfing); **City of Lynden** (Stephen Banham); **City of Blaine** (Bill Bullock); **US Border Patrol** (Michael Maglione)

### Current Event Updates

Brad Valentine let the group know that in a week and a half he will be back at his position as Assistant Director of Infrastructure at Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA].

Bill Bullock said that the City of Blaine has selected a consultant for the design of their Hughes Ave project. Hughes Ave is a secondary truck route into Blaine. This project will improve the intersection angle at Peace Portal Dr, widen the road, and provide better pedestrian connection. It is slated for construction in 2017. Mr. Bullock added that they are trying push for option 3 for the SR 274 interchange redesign. They have a scope of work from Transpo for updating the interchange justification report [IJR], which was initially completed in 2009. By updating the IJR, they hope to speed up the time frame for construction, he said. The interchange has been identified as a Connecting Washington state project.

Todd Carlson commented on the denial of confirmation of Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] Secretary of Transportation Lynn Peterson by the state senate. Roger Millar is now acting Secretary following Ms. Peterson's dismissal. He is an engineer with public-works and planning experience, Mr. Carlson said.

Melissa Fanucci informed the group that she submitted an application to the Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] to fund a project that will integrate the booth status feed from US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] into the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] border wait-time algorithms, allowing for more accurate border wait-time reporting. She also said that she may submit an application for the implementation of a Bluetooth or Wifi reader at one or more border crossings to be used as a secondary border wait-time system. Cynthia Ralko commented that the City of El Paso implemented a similar Bluetooth system, and she can provide contact information for the project managers.

Hugh Conroy said that on February 9<sup>th</sup> US Department of Transportation [USDOT] Secretary Anthony Foxx and Canada's Minister of Transport Marc Garneau signed a memorandum of cooperation between their respective agencies on the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG]. The document, attached in the meeting packet, covers topics that may be of interest to IMTC partner agencies, which Mr. Conroy overviewed. Mr. Conroy is currently a regional border organization representative to the TBWG, representing the IMTC. He also reminded the group of the two-day TBWG peer exchange slated to occur in Bellingham on June 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup>. On the morning of the first day, Mr. Conroy suggested inviting high level federal agency representatives to speak and explain the federal interest in regional border planning and coordination efforts such as the IMTC. Because of the peer exchange, the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] will likely cancel the June IMTC steering committee meeting.

Hugh Conroy told the group of an email he recently received from FHWA about Strategic Highway Research Program 2 [SHRP2] funding becoming available for planning projects. Todd Carlson suggested the Pacific Highway border facilities as a potential funding target for a pilot project such as commercial signalization, dynamic lane management extending back to I-5 on SR 543, or general design work. Bernie Pitura advised working with CBSA and integrating these ideas into plans CBSA may have with those facilities going forward.

Abid Sivic commented on the online NEXUS renewal process, saying that last week when he applied for his renewal it was required that he pay in US dollars. He mentioned that this could discourage Canadian NEXUS users. Brad Valentine said that CBSA is aware of the issue.

Greg Kolesniak followed-up on the discussion of border queues backing up to I-5 on SR 543. There was discussion of dynamic signage on I-5 that could inform trucks of long queues blocking access to the Pacific Highway crossing so that they can make the decision to use the new Aldergrove port instead. Bill Bullock added that the exit 274 interchange improvement could help in providing a secondary exit point for trucks before they reach exit 275 to SR 543. The exit 274 offramp, he said, would go to Odell St, and from there trucks would have an easier way to travel east to an alternative port. Mr. Bullock said that the engineering for the project will occur in 2023 and the project is currently slated to be built by 2030. Hugh Conroy added that this could re-open dialogue on an advanced traveler information system [ATIS] not only for passenger vehicles, but for commercial trucks as well.

Ken Williams added that for certain commodities, trucks may arrive at ports other than the one listed on the preliminary entry forms. Overall though, current systems do not yet accommodate cross-border re-routing by loaded trucks. This may change with future system modifications.

Stephen Banham noted that a lot of trip routing these days is influenced by GPS devices, including which border crossing to use. Hugh Conroy said that going forward it would be beneficial to be more aware of the on-the-fly routing of trucks by GPS when talking about commercial ATIS reporting.

Greg Kolesniak added that the ACE and ACI eManifest services require that cargo data be submitted a certain amount of time before a truck reaches the border (at least an hour for ACI). This moment of information-transfer could be a good opportunity for trucks to receive border wait-time information, he said. Trucks could then choose an appropriate border crossing based on congestion (assuming the border crossing location is not broker-dependent). Richard Welfing warned that a current border wait-time may route all trucks to a certain port and then cause inaccuracies in the wait-time system. Abid Sivic said that the loop detector-based wait-time system is in place at commercial crossings. There would just need to be a way to better access the information.

Hugh Conroy updated the group on the Dynamic Border Management project. He said that one original element of the project was to model loop detector-based border wait-time systems in the Cascade Gateway. The border model developed at the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] can test algorithms used to estimate vehicle volume and calculate current border wait-times. There is money still left in the project, Mr. Conroy said, and any needs or interest partner agencies have that may require a border model can be looked at by WCOG staff. He described one potential modeling scenario being lane-to-booth management, for example modeling the southbound Pacific Highway passenger vehicle crossing where approach lanes unevenly distribute traffic to inspection booths.

## 2015 Traffic volumes presentation – *Melissa Fanucci*

Melissa Fanucci said that she recently received data from US CBP and CBSA on border traffic volumes for 2015. She reviewed some analysis of volume trends for trucks and passenger vehicles. Data tables are attached in the meeting's packet. US CBP sends WCOG monthly counts for the RFID-enabled Ready Lane (southbound only), but NEXUS cards going through the Ready Lane are not counted as NEXUS traffic. This creates a known but difficult to isolate discrepancy with reporting NEXUS volume figures, Ms. Fanucci said, because the Ready Lane is heavily used by NEXUS users as an alternative NEXUS lane when other lanes are full.

Bernie Pitura commented on the problem with Ready Lane-bound vehicles jumping the standard approach queue by traveling down the typically less congested NEXUS approach lane, saying that compliance would be hard to enforce.

Melissa Fanucci added that the NEXUS-Ready Lane reporting problem is most apparent at the US CBP Sumas facility. The Ready Lane there is in operation more often than the NEXUS lane, creating a large discrepancy between northbound and southbound NEXUS figures.

Abid Sivic reiterated that Ready Lane inspections generally take more time than NEXUS inspections because vehicles are not treated as trusted-travelers.

Todd Carlson said that he would be interested to see how big of a problem the NEXUS reporting error is as well as non-NEXUS RFID users coming down the NEXUS lane and queue jumping.

Ken Williams suggested that US CBP may be able to break out inspections by packets and look at fully NEXUS vehicles versus NEXUS/RFID combo vehicles.

Bernie Pitura told the group that at the end of the fiscal year CBSA plans to have RFID technology in all inspection booths at the Aldergrove passenger vehicle facility.

Melissa Fanucci reminded the group of the Pt Roberts-Boundary Bay bus reporting error. CBSA bus volume is consistently double the volume reported by US CBP. Following Ms. Fanucci's observation that the difference may be school buses, Ken Williams confirmed that US CBP does not count school buses. Ms. Fanucci said she will make a note in the data.

In response to the observation that Pacific Highway saw a decrease in US commercial trucks in 2015, Greg Kolesniak said that it was brought to his attention that starting in 2014 and going up until last month US-based carriers were required to register with the provincial Workers' Compensation Board and had to pay an additional premium if they picked up 6 loads or more in a year in British Columbia. The policy was changed with help from the Washington Trucking Association. The decrease in US trucks could be influenced by that issue in 2015, he said.

Melissa Fanucci said that because of CBSA's facilities upgrade at Aldergrove, there is only NEXUS lane data there for November and December in 2015. In that time, 10 percent of cars used the NEXUS lane, she said.

All this data will go into the next IMTC Resource Manual, Ms. Fanucci said. She also announced that Statistics Canada no longer charges fees for their data.

Greg Kolesniak asked if at the northbound Sumas commercial crossing trucks were still not being counted after hours. Melissa Fanucci said that that is the theory for the data discrepancy there.

## Topic Focus: Lynden/Aldergrove Port-of-Entry

### Current activities from the City of Lynden – *Stephen Banham, City of Lynden Public Works*

Stephen Banham presented some of the projects that the City of Lynden is working on.

The city's 7<sup>th</sup> St-improvements project upgrades road facilities to all-weather for better access to the city's historic business district and connects up to the Riverview Rd extension. The extension connects Hannegan Rd and South 6<sup>th</sup> St just south of the business district. Riverview Rd will be built to all-weather specifications with bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and utilities. Another project completes the West Main St upgrades between the Guide Meridian and Berthusen Rd where a large cold storage facility was just constructed. The Bradley/Line Rd Design project upgrades those roads with bicycle lanes, sidewalks, and utilities. Lynden High School is located on Bradley Rd and a new middle school will be built on Line Rd. The Pepin Creek project will add a new creek corridor from the border down to Main St between Double Ditch Rd and Benson Rd. This will allow those roads with large ditches paralleling them to be widened and built to standard specifications while stabilizing shorelines, mitigating flooding, and providing habitat for a number of fish species.

Mr. Banham also told the group that Lynden is celebrating its 125<sup>th</sup> birthday this year. There are no additional celebratory events planned in the city, he said.

Greg Kolesniak asked about the location of a roundabout potentially being built west of the Guide Meridian. Steve Bahman indicated they are looking for intersection improvements at West Main St and Berthusen Rd. If improvements on the Guide Meridian occur, a detour could be through there, he said. Todd Carlson added

that Berthusen Rd could be a truck route, bypassing commercial activity on Guide Meridian as it goes through Lynden. Greg Kolesniak advised involving the Washington Trucking Association on design of a potential roundabout in that area.

### **Presentation from the Township of Langley on current projects – *Richard Welfing, Township of Langley***

Richard Welfing presented some of the projects on the Township of Langley's radar.

Mr. Welfing said that there had previously been concerns with queue jumping at the Aldergrove border crossing where drivers would come from 0 Ave and turn into the queue built up on Highway 13. That routing was prohibited in 2009, he said. Because of the Aldergrove facility expansion, 0 Ave east of Highway 13 has been rerouted. West of Highway 13, 0 Ave has been closed and converted into the southbound border approach. The 0 Ave closure necessitated a temporary traffic signal at 264th St and Highway 13, but Mr. Welfing said that the geometry and grade makes for a difficult intersection for motorists turning onto Highway 13. In the long-term Highway 13 will be upgraded to 5 lanes of traffic (2 northbound and 3 southbound), but that is dependent on funding.

Richard Welfing told the group that 16<sup>th</sup> Ave has been identified as an important east-west connection in the Lower Mainland. It is the closest continuous east-west route north of the border in the Cascade Gateway. Traffic on 16<sup>th</sup> Ave is not yet at capacity, but from 1992 to 2011 traffic volume grew by 40 percent. As much as 16 percent of the current volume is truck traffic. The 16<sup>th</sup> Ave corridor study will look at land uses, road hierarchies, intersection configurations, traffic data, and other areas to help develop short, medium, and long term corridor improvement options. In the short-term, recommendations so far include sightline, signage, and lighting improvements, RCMP pullouts, consolidated driveways and more. Scoping out 15+ years, they'd like to see the corridor upgraded to 5 lanes.

Greg Kolesniak said that BC Trucking Association [BCTA] members agreed with the improvements, but most had concerns with the timeline.

Kristen Tiede commented that the City of Surrey is protecting for 6 lanes of road between Highways 99 and 15 (possibly longer) with the expectation of large scale residential and industrial development on 16<sup>th</sup> Ave through Surrey.

### **Review of IMTC Objectives List – updated version review**

Hugh Conroy guided the group through the revisions and additions made to the IMTC objective list based on previous meeting discussions. A marked-up and annotated version based on the original document is included in the packet. Staff at WCOG will email out the resulting, current draft so that members can submit any final comments they have before the list is brought to the Core Group for approval.

## **Discussion of upcoming March IMTC Core Group meeting agenda – items to discuss with a broader audience**

Hugh Conroy said that for the Core Group meeting, an update can be given as to what projects the group is looking at making part of the next annual update of the project list. He added that an approval of the project list wouldn't be appropriate quite yet for this year's update.

Hugh Conroy spoke to the regional border master planning occurring on the southern border and their use of ranking systems based on quantitative metrics for prioritizing certain categories of projects. He said that one item to look at for upcoming discussions is developing similar prioritization criteria for IMTC projects. Mr. Conroy added that the group has identified in the past an interest in managing the Cascade Gateway network of border crossings and infrastructure as a system. Having prioritization criteria that reflect system-wide management and operations may be of value.

## **Meeting adjourned at 12:10 PM with Aldergrove port tour following**

The tour was directed by CBSA Chief of Operations Bernie Pitura.