

Purpose

The International Mobility and Trade Corridor Program (IMTC) is a voluntary, binational, regional coalition of government, business interests, and non-governmental entities established to support the improvement of **safety, mobility, and security for the Cascade Gateway** – the five land-border ports of entry connecting Western Washington State and Lower Mainland British Columbia.

The IMTC Program is administered by the Whatcom Council of Governments (WCOG), a U.S. metropolitan planning organization (MPO) in Bellingham, Washington. Being largely comprised of government agency representatives, the IMTC coalition does not advocate for regulatory or legislative changes. Rather, through the IMTC Program, participants **coordinate planning, identify shared system needs, and optimize investments and operations through collaboration, innovation, and partnership.**

Goals and strategies

IMTC participants have identified goals along with specific strategies to accomplish them. These goals and strategies (below labeled with a “G” or an “S” respectively) are periodically reviewed and revised to best align with changing regional needs and changes in the policy and legal environment around cross-border trade and travel. This version of the IMTC Goals & Strategies document was approved by the IMTC Core Group on March 17, 2016.

G1. Coordinate planning

For a collection of border crossings that together serves a major North American travel and trade corridor, IMTC fills the critical need for continuous and structured communication between the multiple agencies and entities whose facilities and operations converge at this connection point.

- S1.1** Regularly convene representatives of the agencies that own and operate regional, border-crossing transportation and inspection facilities.
- S1.2** Develop and maintain cross-border, interagency, cross-sector relationships that are essential for efficient and effective communication, trust-based decision making, and advancing improvements through partnership.
- S1.3** Facilitate continuous involvement and dialogue with representatives of industries that depend on cross-border connections as well as stakeholders from non-governmental organizations and academia.
- S1.4** Develop and periodically update a list of projects (infrastructure, operations, information technology, planning, communications) that address shared needs of IMTC Program participants.
- S1.5** Support improvement and operation of the Cascade Gateway as a system rather than five individual ports of entry.
- S1.6** To plan for future capacity of Cascade Gateway land-border facilities as trade and travel volumes grow, periodically update estimates of how all modes (road, rail, marine, and air) could be optimally used to serve international transportation demand on the corridor.
- S1.7** Engage with other regional, cross-border coalitions and participate in the border-wide Canada-U.S. Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG).
- S1.8** Conduct near-term and long-term planning for the Cascade Gateway.

G2. Improve regional, cross-border trade & transportation data

Planning and systems management requires current, data-based information. Furthermore, information best supports *interagency* cooperation when all parties are involved in how data are collected and synthesized.

- S2.1** Collect and share transportation and trade data.
- S2.2** Maintain and improve border wait time systems.
- S2.3** Maintain and improve data products including border wait time data archives, booth-status data, and periodic sample surveys of cross-border trucks and passenger vehicles.

G3. Support infrastructure improvements

Border-crossing infrastructure (roads, port facilities, information systems hardware, etc.) is an aggregation of components owned and operated by multiple agencies in two countries. Therefore, in the border environment, dedicated attention to coordinated planning, design, and project delivery is needed in order to identify and benefit from the many opportunities for increased efficiency and productivity. Sustained, proactive coordination also increases opportunities for funding partnerships.

- S3.1** Improve border crossing approach roads.
- S3.2** Improve cross-border rail.
- S3.3** Improve corridor connections of trade and travel routes.
- S3.4** Integrate Intelligent Transportation Systems (ITS).
- S3.5** Encourage harmonization of cross-border ITS systems, standards, and products

G4. Support coordinated implementation of U.S. and Canadian border policy

IMTC provides an important, regional mechanism for federal *and* sub-national government agency representatives to collaboratively assess needs for policy change and consider if multi-agency strategies could improve implementation of adopted national and binational policies.

- S4.1** Coordinate improvements, operations, and communications in accordance with the goals of federal policies including the Beyond the Border Action Plan (BTB).
- S4.2** Specifically, maximize coordination with annual updates to the BTB Binational Infrastructure Investment Plan (BIIP)
- S4.3** Complement, as appropriate, border related initiatives of British Columbia and Washington State including memoranda of cooperation and the Joint Transportation Executive Council (JTEC).
- S4.4** Explore options for funding future Cascade Gateway improvements including binational financing mechanisms.

G5. Improve operations

IMTC supports dialog between agencies, industries, and communities that helps identify and evaluate possible improvements to how border facilities are operated and how some aspects of traffic and inspection programs (e.g. NEXUS, FAST) are managed.

- S5.1** Improve traffic management at all Cascade Gateway ports-of-entry.
- S5.2** Support ongoing effectiveness of the NEXUS program.
- S5.3** Support optimal operations of the FAST (Free and Secure Trade) programs.
- S5.4** Coordinate support for adequate staffing of border inspection facilities.
- S5.5** Use data-based tools to evaluate operational alternatives such as transportation demand modeling and facility simulation modeling.
- S5.6** Support integration of information systems when appropriate including intelligent transportation systems (ITS).
- S5.7** Support identification of consistent funding for maintenance of ITS (wait time, traffic management, etc.)
- S5.8** Support operational improvements envisioned under the Beyond the Border (BTB) Action Plan
 - S5.8.1** Support the implementation of pre-clearance for passenger rail.
 - S5.8.2** Support consideration of alternatives enabled by a pre-clearance agreement such as shared border operations zones at ports-of-entry and off-border inspection functions.
 - S5.8.3** Support optimal adoption and application of radio frequency identification (RFID) technology (for both NEXUS and non-NEXUS travel documents).