

International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Core Group Meeting Summary

March 16, 2017

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at the Squalicum Boathouse, Bellingham, WA.

Meeting attendance

Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] (Brad Valentine, Ryan Vanderstar, Bernie Pitura); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain, Bob Wilson); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson, Cliff Hall, Jay Drye, Miguel Gavino, Tim McCall); **US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm, Craig Hope, Phillip Stanford, J. Rene Ortega); **City of Blaine** (Bill Bullock, Bonnie Onyon, Dave Wilbrecht); **Congresswoman Suzan DelBene's Office** (Kaylee Galloway); **BC Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Lindsay Samson); **BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]** (Abid Sivic); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **US Consulate Vancouver** (Mike Bradecamp); **Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]** (Michael Villnave); **A&A Customs Brokers** (Shannon Johnston); **West Coast Duty Free** (Len DaSilva); **Senator Patty Murray's Office** (Ann Seabott)

Current event updates

Kaylee Galloway asked that IMTC partner agencies keep WA State Congresswoman Suzan DelBene's office informed on transportation issues so that the Congresswoman can assist those agencies in any way she can.

John Dahm informed the group that U.S. Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] are gearing up for increased spring traffic volumes through the region's land ports-of-entry.

Phil Stanford reported that this winter's snowfall caused road damage on the Guide Meridian, which affected the US CBP Lynden port-of-entry.

Abid Sivic updated the group on B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's [BC MoTI] integration of US CBP's booth status data feed. The software component of the integration is done, allowing BC MoTI to track the position of the southbound NEXUS lane at Peace Arch, which can be moved dynamically. The data integration will help BC MoTI better report border wait-times. Mr. Sivic said that they will be doing field tests soon.

Jay Drye reported that rock slides on Chuckanut Dr near Bellingham are taking up a lot of the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] field crews' attention. He added that a permeant repair to the Nooksack River bridge on Guide Meridian, which was struck by a truck last fall, will be done this year.

Tim McCall informed that group that he has taken over information technology services [ITS] for the border from Paul Neel at WSDOT. He commented on the challenges they faced this winter, especially power outages affecting cameras and other ITS components.

Melissa Fanucci said that she is currently working on the 2016 Performance Review of IMTC. The document is a review of the IMTC's accomplishments in 2016 and will include data from the recent feedback survey. Ms. Fanucci said that document will be available by next meeting.

Todd Carlson talked about the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting happening May 2nd and 3rd. Charles Knutson, chief policy advisor to Governor Inslee, and WA State Secretary of Transportation Roger Millar will both be speaking. Unfortunately, because of elections occurring in British Columbia in May, there will not be much representation from the province, he said. The meeting will be held in Bellingham at Western Washington University [WWU].

Laurie Trautman said that the Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI] is helping host TBWG at WWU, where the BPRI is headquartered. She also reported that a delegation from Peru is coming to tour this region's border crossing facilities. There is also a group of Lithuanians who would like to be part of a future tour.

Bernie Pitura reported that on January 19th the new President of Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA], John Ossowski, visited the Aldergrove port-of-entry. He also informed the group that they are calling freight carriers that use other ports in the district and explaining the permit-restriction lift at the Aldergrove commercial border crossing. They have received positive feedback from carriers, he said.

Ryan Vanderstar announced that CBSA's FAST-first freight approach at Pacific Highway is now operational. All three inspection booths at CBSA's Pacific Highway commercial facility now service all commercial traffic, with a traffic control light giving priority to FAST-lane traffic. Mr. Vanderstar also said that they are preparing for the growing trend in tourism as the weather turns.

Ann Seabott informed the group that she is listening in for Senator Patty Murray.

Shannon Johnston said that she is now the main A&A Customs Brokers contact for IMTC, taking over for Lynn Woodbury.

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Hugh Conroy updated the group on the status of IMTC's funding. Core IMTC functions are currently only funded through 2017. There is a funding strategy document included in meeting packet. The document includes an introduction about the IMTC, a list of partner agencies, highlighted successes of the IMTC group, an explanation of the patchwork of previous funding sources, and current short and long term funding strategies. The IMTC's work plan for 2017 is included as an appendix. Mr. Conroy asked IMTC members to share the document with their respective agencies.

Mr. Conroy said that WSDOT is committing two contributions of \$100k for fiscal years 2018 and 2019 for the IMTC. He said they will also ask the Whatcom Council of Government's [WCOG] Policy Board for a percentage of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant [STBG] funds that are availed to the Whatcom region through Washington State every year for transportation projects. In the long term, Mr. Conroy explained that one strategy is to start a dialogue with the U.S. Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] and Transport Canada [TC] regarding federal funding opportunities for regional border planning activities leading up to the development of the next U.S. federal transportation authorization act.

Review of 2016 data trends

Melissa Fanucci told the group that WCOG has received some new items of data this year from inspection agencies. CBSA has offered FAST driver card data. US CBP released some southbound pedestrian data and Ready Lane data, which is important at Sumas, where the Ready Lane has longer hours of operation than the NEXUS lane during the week.

Ms. Fanucci reviewed some trends in Cascade Gateway border volumes. Trucks at CBSA's Aldergrove and Abbotsford-Huntingdon commercial ports-of-entry have increased, but passenger vehicles have decreased. The increase in the percentage of southbound NEXUS/Ready Lane traffic from 2015 to 2016 is not accurate – there was previously no Ready Lane data reported to WCOG in 2015. Northbound volumes at Abbotsford-Huntingdon, however, show a NEXUS increase of 16 percent.

Data tables were attached in the meeting packet.

Updated regional license plate survey - Laurie Trautman, BPRI

Laurie Trautman reviewed the Border Policy Research Institute's License Plate Survey project, which started in 2013 and continued in 2016. The project consists of two teams of student research assistants counting Canadian license plates in parking lots of prominent retail destinations along the I-5 corridor from the Canadian border to Marysville. Research assistants also observed Canadian license plates in the stream of I-5 traffic at two overpass locations – near Custer (north of Bellingham) and near Bow (north of Burlington). Ms. Trautman said that the BPRI's winter 2017 Border Brief compares data collected in 2013 with more current 2016 data, after which the value of the Canadian dollar dropped against the U.S. dollar.

Ms. Trautman reported that in both 2013 and 2016, the most popular destinations for Canadian shoppers were shopping centers in Bellingham and Blaine and the outlet malls in Burlington and Marysville. In Bellingham, there were 23 percent less Canadian cars at Bellis Fair Mall and 60 percent less at Walmart in 2016 as compared to 2013. Of the three surveyed Costcos (Bellingham, Burlington, and Marysville), there was an average 50 percent decrease in Canadian cars in their parking lots. There was also a large decrease in Canadian cars moving south of Bellingham, according to the overpass observations.

Todd Carlson said that he, Hugh Conroy, and Kevin Murphy of the Skagit Council of Governments [SCOG] have been in discussion regarding a potential freight origin-destination study, with an element of the study being the observation of commercial trucks crossing the border southbound and using the Highway 9 corridor. He acknowledged that the BPRI's License Plate Survey can help them scope out the project. Hugh Conroy explained that they could similarly observe license plates coming down the highway (though using an

automated ITS-approach) to collect data on trucks entering and exiting the region. Data would help inform the travel demand models of WCOG and SCOG.

Dave Wilbrecht described a company using scrubbed credit card data to analyze the origins of shoppers, what they are buying, their demographics, and other information that can help inform businesses and cities about potential commercial opportunities. They are able to capture Canadian data as well, he said.

CBP's 2017 Reimbursable Services Program - Craig Hope, CBP

Craig Hope handed out a document that reviews US CBP's Reimbursable Services Program [RSP]. The program allows CBP to enter into agreements with public and private entities for reimbursable services, such as customs, immigration, agricultural processing, border security, and support at U.S. ports-of-entry. The CBP website has explanations on how to join the program and offers more details. For example, Bellingham Airport could be a potential partner if they are seeking additional inspection services, Mr. Hope said. He asked that IMTC partners help get the word out about the program.

Mr. Hope also reviewed the US CBP's Donations Acceptance Program. Under specific guidelines, CBP can accept public and private donations that go to improving the infrastructure or technology at U.S. ports-of-entry. Small scale donations are proposals expected to cost \$3MM or less, and they may be submitted year round. Proposals over \$3MM are considered large scale donations and must be submitted according to a review schedule.

J.R. Ortega informed the group that there is a comments section on the CBP website. General complaints are welcome, he said, but compliments are also appreciated.

Current Project updates

Border Freight Operations study

Hugh Conroy explained that from recent discussions at IMTC, there are opportunities for additional scope elements to the Border Freight Operations study [BFO].

One element is comparing commodity and origin-destination analyses from the 2016 field effort with similar analyses done in 2011 to create a baseline Cascade Gateway freight profile to use for discussing future scenarios.

Another element is analyzing the new processing facilities and capacity expansion at CBSA's Aldergrove commercial port-of-entry by looking at past and present route strategies and conducting a time and motion study for freight. Origin-destination data from the BFO combined with historical travel times of certain segments of the freight transportation system can contribute to the time and motion study.

A third element is tracking the changing characteristics of freight in the Cascade Gateway. This is presently being worked on through the continued interviewing of frequently crossing carriers, which began in 2015, Mr. Conroy said.

Lindsey Samson said that the B.C. Trucking Association [BCTA] has held three sessions on the upcoming U.S. mandate that carriers implement electronic logging devices [ELDs] into their fleet by December 2017. ELDs provide a way to track driver hours of service electronically rather than by paper. They can also monitor other aspects of driver behavior. Hugh Conroy said that there are concerns that truck parking near the border may need to be increased now that truck driver hours will be stricter. With ELDs, drivers that are very close to their final destination in lower mainland B.C. but bump up against their allotted hours of service at the border might not be willing to cut it close or risk unforeseen delay while still operating their vehicle. They would instead have to park and rest.

Dynamic Border Management

Hugh Conroy said that WCOG had used general purpose simulation software for border wait-time modeling as part of the RFID element of the Dynamic Border Management project [DBM]. Plans for a pilot RFID project are not currently advancing, Mr. Conroy said, so instead of sitting on that portion of DBM funding, he has been in discussions with CBP regarding using the simulation software to model the effects of CBP processing I-94 documents at a location offsite from the main port-of-entry processing facilities.

John Dahm explained that non-American and non-Canadian citizens crossing into the U.S. from Canada require an I-94 document, which must be renewed every six months(?). In the Cascade Gateway, I-94 processing occurs in the port-of-entry lobby. Because most of the current lobby traffic is associated with I-94s, Mr. Dahm said US CBP is looking to move that processing and associated payment interaction offsite, potentially in Canada depending on future preclearance policy. A pilot offsite processing location in Peace Arch Park is in discussion. To support the scope of a pilot, simulation modeling could show the potential benefits to lobby foot-traffic congestion and border wait-times if I-94 processing was relocated away from the port-of-entry lobby. Some data collection in the lobby is required to set up such a simulation model. Mr. Dahm explained that US CBP has jump-kits that allow them to set up a mobile service kiosk and process required biometrics remotely.

Len DaSilva suggested that space may be available at one of the Duty Free stores adjacent to the port-of-entry where I-94 processing could occur.

J.R. Ortega explained that in his time working for US CBP in Laredo, TX, he has seen the offsite processing of I-94s be especially beneficial at reducing congestion during peak periods of travel.

John Dahm said that he is hoping to use CBP Explorer Scouts (youth and young adults receiving CBP/law enforcement-related training) to collect data to be used in the model.

Peace Arch/Douglas and Pacific Highway pedestrian route planning

Melissa Fanucci said that she recently sent out an updated draft of the pedestrian route plan. The problem is that there is no designated pedestrian route between the CBSA and CBP ports-of-entry at Pacific Highway. A stakeholder group is trying to figure out the safest route that could be officially demarcated for pedestrian travel. The route could potentially cross properties owned by CBSA, the General Services Administration [GSA], and WSDOT. One alternative they are looking at is for WSDOT to simply delineate an official route using road paint on the existing infrastructure.

Ms. Fanucci said that Peace Arch-Douglas, the sidewalk that borders the central Peace Arch Park lawn ends midway, leaving a gap from the Peace Arch monument to the US CBP facility. They are looking at funding opportunities to eliminate the pedestrian gap.

The final pedestrian route planning report will be out in the next couple of months, Ms. Fanucci said.

IMTC 2017 project list - review and adoption - *Action Item*

Hugh Conroy reviewed the 2017 IMTC project list with the group. The project list includes unfunded IMTC participant projects, unfunded projects in the region identified in the Border Infrastructure Investment Plan [BIIP], and funded projects. Each project is categorized by how it relates IMTC goals.

Mr. Conroy explained the third project on the list, the IMTC core funding ask. Most of IMTC's core funding has come from the U.S. federal Coordinated Border Infrastructure program [CBI], which is now defunct. Canadian sources have also been helpful funding individual IMTC projects. Current IMTC core funds will only last through 2017. The ask is for three years of core funding at \$240,000 a year. WSDOT has committed \$200,000, split between the 2018 and 2019 fiscal years.

Hugh Conroy noted that project number 12 on the list is newly added. The project calls for the inclusion of US CBP's booth status data feed, which is currently being integrated into BC MoTI border wait-time algorithms, in the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse archive.

Brad Valentine clarified that the CBSA primary booth RFID installations are completed, as is the FAST Lane Realignment at Pacific Highway. Commissioning of the Commercial Large Scale Fixed Imaging facility at Pacific Highway is expected to happen in late spring, he said. The Boundary Bay Port of Entry Redevelopment is no longer a priority for CBSA, Mr. Valentine added.

There was consensus agreement on adopting the current IMTC Project List for 2017 with the discussed edits.

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Hugh Conroy said that the TBWG steering committee is always looking for potential points of interests for a border tour. At the May meeting, the border tour is scheduled for the afternoon of the second day. From a recent doodle poll of possible tour locations, steering committee members showed interest in touring the rail Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System [VACIS] and the new CBSA Aldergrove facility. There is also the possibility of touring a new state of the art border freight operations facility in Cloverdale, if meeting participants have the appetite to extend the tour beyond the border.