

International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

May 21, 2015

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

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

Meeting attendance

B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] (Abid Sivic); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman, David Davidson); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Sean Averill, John Linde); **City of Surrey** (Kristen Tiede); **SmartRail** (Kenneth Jones); **U.S. Customs & Border Protection [U.S. CBP]** (Michele James, Mike Bol, J. Rene Ortega); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson); **Canadian Consulate Seattle** (Kevin Cook); **U.S. Consulate Vancouver** (Peter Broadbent); **Point Roberts Taxpayers Association** (Mark Robbins); **Citizen's Transportation Advisory Group [CTAG]** (Arthur Reber); **Privy Council Office, Govt. of Canada** (Nancy Faraday-Smith); **Office of Senator Murray** (Ann Seabott); **British Columbia Trucking Association** (Greg Kolesniak); **Better Borders Northwest** (Roger Bull); **City of Blaine** (Bill Bullock); **Pacific Northwest Economic Region [PNWER]** (Matt Morrison)

Current Events Updates

Abid Sivic said that BC MoTI is continuing work to find a funding option for dynamic lane management tracking, where BC MoTI can track the lane type locations of southbound U.S. CBP lanes (which change dynamically throughout the day) in order to more accurately estimate border wait-times.

Sean Averill said that construction at the CBSA Aldergrove facility is moving along quickly and completion could be mid to late fall of this year.

Anne Seabott said that trade legislation was passed in the U.S. Senate and Senator Murray and Senator Cantwell voted for its passage.

Mike Bol commented on the upcoming Women's FIFA World Cup in Canada. The championship game is July 5th in Vancouver, and U.S. CBP is looking at congestion mitigation. He also noted that the U.S. CBP West Coast Trade Symposium is coming up next week, May 27th, in Tacoma, WA. Michele James said that the U.S. CBP Commissioner will attend and speak.

Melissa Fanucci updated the group on the U.S. Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] sponsored freight planning peer exchange she attended in Detroit at the beginning of the month. Key topics of discussion included freight planning at the state/provincial level and incorporating border freight planning into a statewide initiative. She will provide a bulleted list of important topics from the peer exchange for the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG].

Roger Bull mentioned that the extension of the highway bill, which would help keep the Highway Trust Fund solvent, is still held up in congress.

Jim Kohnke said that the BC Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting [AGM] and Conference is Sunday, May 24th to Tuesday, May 26th. He said that he will report on the AGM and Conference at the next meeting.

Hugh Conroy said that the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act [MAP-21] expires at the end of May and an extension is likely. On May 7th, Mr. Conroy said WCOG and BPRI attended a conference call with CBSA officials about WCOG's RFID modeling as part of the IMTC's Dynamic Border Management Project [DBM]. CBSA headquarters is interested in the modeling and the business case for an RFID pilot project, he said. On May 6th, Mr. Conroy said he attended a Commission for Environmental Cooperation [CEC] meeting in Bellingham with other IMTC partner agencies. He said it was beneficial to hear about greening the border projects and congestion-reduction benefits.

The 2014 BtB Implementation Plan, pre-clearance, and the Forward Plan – Nancy Faraday-Smith, Advisor to the Border Action Implementation Team at the Canadian Privy Council Office

Included in the meeting's packet is the 2014 Beyond the Border [BtB] Implementation Report, a joint report from both the U.S. and Canada on the progress of the action plan, which usually comes out every December. Nancy Faraday-Smith said that the report was delayed until now to include the recent preclearance agreement between the two countries. The following are topics Ms. Faraday-Smith touched upon, gently, in her overview of the BtB through 2014:

- Of the 32 initiatives in the BtB Action Plan, about 75 percent of them are in a “green” stage, that is, they are implemented, part of regular business now, or are ongoing.
- On March 29th, CBSA launched the Integrated Import Declaration as part of the Single Window Initiative. The initiative will allow traders to provide all required import information to CBSA electronically and reduce the burden of paper information and duplication.
- The Entry-Exit initiative third and fourth phases are not there yet and require further tabling in Canadian parliament since tabling did not occur in this session of parliament. That will most likely be picked up again in January.
- Early indications from the Integrated Cargo Security Strategy [ICSS] pilot in Prince Rupert, BC point to it being successful from a national security screening point-of-view.
- The Executive Steering Committee, which oversees BtB Implementation, met last September and agreed to moving forward with key initiatives and agreed to Forward Plan measures to bridge the transition in the Canadian government to 2016 and the U.S. government to 2017. The Forward Plan measures-summary is included in the packet and includes freight planning and RFID.

- With regards to the ICSS, the U.S. and Canada are working towards a joint definition of contraband to begin work on a contraband pilot, which would take place somewhere on the West Coast. The best consensus for contraband is narcotics.
- There is possibly interest in expanding work done by the U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] and Canadian Food Inspection Agency [CFIA] on the Asian gypsy moth to other countries.
- There is a commitment from both the U.S. and Canada to deal with the backlog of NEXUS applicants. Out of the North American Leader Summit, there were talks of recognition of a third country trusted traveler program coming out of Mexico.
- Regarding trusted traders, it has been recognized that tier 2 traders are finding it hard to understand the cost-benefit ratio to enrolling in the trusted trader program.
- Harmonization between the Canadian Partners in Protection program [PIP] and the U.S.'s Customs-Trade Partnership Against Terrorism program [C-T PAT] resulted in the PIP/C-T PAT portal (currently in testing), where commercial carriers will be able to apply for both programs through one process. It is targeted for launch in late summer to early fall of this year.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC] is developing an RFID strategy for Canada. Ms. Faraday-Smith said she is interested in the work done at WCOG regarding RFID. She said they are looking to set up a four-way conference call with the lead agencies, the Privy Council Office and the National Security Council [NSC].
- The Forward Plan was released Tuesday, and just before its release Prime Minister Harper had met with key stakeholders. The meeting went well, Ms. Faraday-Smith has heard. There were comments about meeting commitments under the action plan, and the shared view is that they need to show benefits and complete more commitments before rolling out "Version 2.0" of the action plan.
- The Executive Steering Committee will meet again on June 17th.

Melissa Fanucci asked if there was any new information about the Single Window initiative. Nancy Faraday-Smith said that Canada currently has 9 Partner Government Agencies [PGAs] that will participate in the Single Window initiative compared to over 40 in the U.S.

David Davidson commented on the NEXUS program application backlog, saying that it is due in part because of the Transportation Security Administration's [TSA] pre-check program, not necessarily the land-border benefit. He also asked about the NAFTA visa categories and if there was any progress to updating the professional categories. Nancy Faraday-Smith said that there is no appetite to open up NAFTA right now. There is a known employer pilot, but that does not solve the business traveler problem, she said. She did note that it seems sensible to update the professional categories list.

Todd Carlson mentioned a recent Commission on Environmental Cooperation [CEC] meeting, where the harmfulness of truck emissions at the border was discussed. He said they are trying to find ways to make the Free and Secure Trade program [FAST] work in the Cascade Gateway, but so far it is to no avail because of the way commodities move in this region. Hugh Conroy commented on FAST, saying that it works well for manufacturers in the east where enrollment in the program is more industry driven, but in the Cascade Gateway region it is more carrier driven and much less viable because of the market environment here.

Ms. Faraday-Smith said that a pilot that allowed PIP-only members (non CSA members) through the FAST lanes showed that that allowance didn't cause much of a detriment to the system, and they are looking at

potentially regularizing this. The U.S. regularizing pre-inspection could also reduce peak truck wait-times, she said.

Greg Kolesniak said that the truckers transiting the Pacific Highway crossing tend not to have a positive experience. He said that in the Ontario pilot, the biggest time savings was eliminating cash transactions at the border. Mr. Kolesniak said that the pre-inspection model is a good stepping stone, but they would rather see true preclearance away from the border, possibly tied in to the FAST program, where trucks wouldn't have to stop at the border.

Hugh Conroy said that consensus seems to be that legislation for preclearance is still a year off and asked Ms. Faraday-Smith if it was better to go slowly preclearance discussions right now or if it's appropriate for agencies to start a dialogue on preclearance strategies and operations. Nancy Faraday-Smith said that the legislation being tabled in Canada could possibly happen early in the new year and that is a positive outlook. Regarding preclearance, it is not too early for U.S. and Canadian agencies to engage one another. She is not sure of the content that might go into the legislation, but discussions now could shape the drafting of that legislation. She also said that CBSA and U.S. CBP may draft a fact sheet about the differences in preclearance and pre-inspection.

Matt Morrison talked about monthly conference calls that the Pacific Northwest Economic Region [PNWER] has been conducting as part of a preclearance task force made up of agency and industry stakeholders. The Leahy bill was just introduced a couple days ago, which adds to the Civilian Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act [CEJA] bill that was introduced in a previous congress. U.S. approval of the preclearance agreement has been tied to the CEJA bill, he said. Out of the PNWER task force, three subcommittees were organized to focus on specific preclearance topics: U.S. legislation, Canadian legislation, and facilities (all modes).

Regional NEXUS update

John Linde gave a brief update on NEXUS statistics. He said at the Boundary Bay crossing, NEXUS lane usage is consistently over 40 percent of traffic. At Douglas-Peace Arch and Pacific Highway northbound it's consistently over 30 percent. He said usage is less at Abbotsford-Huntingdon crossing, but there are lane approach issues there. Volume reductions due to the changing exchange rate haven't been as pronounced in the NEXUS lanes, he said.

Mike Bol said that NEXUS applications at the Birch Bay NEXUS enrollment center are on average 3,000 appointments per month. At 30 days out from appointment, there are about 3,000 applications, at 60 days there are 3,000 more, and at 90 days there are 3,000 more. He said that the Pacific Northwest region has the highest trusted traveler enrollment in the U.S. He also noted that about 44 percent of daily trips through U.S. CBP facilities use NEXUS.

Rene Ortega added that regional enrollment for NEXUS has exceeded 200,000.

Hugh Conroy asked about any noticeable NEXUS growth at the U.S. CBP Sumas crossing, which added NEXUS in 2012. Rene Ortega said about 14 percent of traffic there is NEXUS. John Linde said that at the CBSA facility there, it is about the same.

2015 Resource Manual

Melissa Fanucci unveiled the 2015 IMTC Resource Manual, the annual update of border statistics and metrics for the Cascade Gateway. She noted a couple new metrics for the 2015 update: 2014 mode volume metrics that compare last year's volumes to 2013 volumes and to the 5 year trend; and similar comparative wait-time metrics. More post-processed data from the 2013/14 IMTC Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey is included in the manual as well.

Mike Bol asked if Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse loop detector volume data is getting better at matching volume data from U.S. CBP. Melissa Fanucci said that loop detector volume data seems to be less accurate during periods of high volume.

Ms. Fanucci also noted that the Pt. Roberts data discrepancy for buses and trucks (where southbound and northbound volumes differ by a wide margin, as discussed at previous meetings) was not put into the manual. She also pointed out a discrepancy in NEXUS volume at Peace Arch-Douglas port-of-entry, where the NEXUS use appears lower going southbound than going northbound. She said this could be due to NEXUS vehicles using the Ready Lane going southbound and thus possibly not being counted as NEXUS (northbound Douglas does not have a Ready Lane).

Pt. Roberts

Arthur Reber discussed some issues he and other active Pt. Roberts community members observe at the Pt. Roberts-Boundary Bay port-of-entry. He said there is a desire for dynamic lane management, where booth types can be changed. He also noted a discrepancy in queue lengths at the crossing, where line-ups are longer southbound going into Pt. Roberts than northbound going into Canada.

Regarding NEXUS, he said that due to the hill just north of the crossing it is hard for NEXUS users to see whether or not the southbound NEXUS lane is open before committing to passing the standard-traffic queue. If the NEXUS lane is not open, then those travelers who already committed to the NEXUS lane have to cut in to the standard approach lane, which invokes aggression from other travelers, he said. There is no indicator leading up to the southbound crossing detailing if the NEXUS is open or closed and no signage for NEXUS hours of operation.

Michele James said that it would be beneficial to have a meeting with the U.S. CBP port director, which Mr. Reber noted used to occur before the former port director retired.

Arthur Reber also mentioned an idea raised in the Pt. Roberts community about dedicating a crossing-lane or another crossing altogether solely for residents of Pt. Roberts (since congestion is largely caused by non-residents).

Mark Robbins said that since Puget Sound Energy moved utility infrastructure back from the Pt. Roberts U.S. CBP facility, there is room for expansion of lanes.

Project Updates:

IMTC Commercial Vehicle Operations Study moved to 2016

Hugh Conroy said that the funding the IMTC was awarded by FHWA in November for a commercial vehicle operations study to start this summer has been tied up for various reasons by FHWA. Mr. Conroy noted that the office at FHWA they work with has recently had some turnover. Since the survey crew would have needed to be hired already, most elements of the project are being pushed back to the summer of 2016. This summer, increments of study can be done, Mr. Conroy said, such as some observational studies and the carrier survey. The BPRI already has one student supervisor in place for this summer.

David Davidson added that the study was originally was going to take place this summer and next in order to gather before-and-after observations regarding construction of the Aldergrove CBSA commercial facility. They still hope to try to do some of the “before” work this summer, Mr. Davidson said.

Closing Comments

Matt Morrison announced that the Pacific Northwest Economic Region’s [PNWER] 25th Annual Summit will take place in Big Sky, Montana from July 12th to 16th.