

International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

May 26, 2016

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

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

Meeting attendance

Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] (Daniela Evans, Colleen Pinvidic); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain, Bob Wilson); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson); **Transport Canada [TC]** (Chris Hoff); **US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (Ron McMillan); **BC Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Lindsay Samson); **City of Blaine** (Bill Bullock); **Congresswoman Susan DelBene's Office** (Kaylee Galloway)

Current event updates

Melissa Fanucci told the group that she will be spearheading the intelligent transportation systems [ITS] element update as part of the Whatcom Council of Government's [WCOG] regional transportation plan update. The regional plan update will be completed in 2017. She added that she will be remapping the locations of the near-border loop detectors in the Cascade Gateway for the online Border Data Warehouse. She will be checking for any detectors that aren't currently identified as well as validating that the correct detectors are being used for the correct wait-time calculation. There could be changes with the data in the online warehouse in the future, she noted.

Bill Bullock updated the group on the city of Blaine's near-border projects. Engineering is underway for the city's Hughes Ave project, which will improve the angle of the intersection at Hughes Ave and Peace Portal Dr. The project will support the eventual interchange improvement of I-5 exit 274. Construction is set for 2017. Hughes Ave and Sweet Rd could be links to an alternative route to other border crossings, Mr. Bullock said. He also said that Blaine is sending out for proposals for the re-channelization of Boblett St to provide better turning lanes for trucks going to I-5 and better congestion mitigation up to the border. They are seeking funding from the Economic Development Investment Program [EDI] to begin an interchange justification report [IJR] update for exit 274. Mr. Bullock added that they now have an attractive alternative that doesn't change the current infrastructure of the interchange as greatly as previous alternatives.

Todd Carlson gave an update for the Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]. They are paving on I-5 northbound from Ferndale to up to exit 275 in Blaine and southbound from Bellingham to Lake Samish. Mr. Carlson also said that WA State Governor Inslee and BC Premier Clark will be at a meeting in San Francisco as part of the Pacific Coast Collaborative. They will be briefed on border wait-time systems, BC Highway 11, the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] peer exchange happening June 8-9 in Bellingham, the Buffalo Bills mobile NEXUS enrollment center, RFID, and continued involvement in IMTC.

Ron McMillan reported that there was a US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] pilot program for commercial traffic single-use user fees being paid online at Buffalo, Detroit, and El Paso. By the end of the year they hope to have all ports signed up, he said. Most of the single-use pay-by-cash people are smaller businesses.

Daniela Evans informed the group that discussions continue regarding the Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] Pacific Highway facility master plan. The scope of the plan encompasses the commercial, NEXUS, and passenger vehicle operations of the port. CBSA inspectors are undergoing hidden-compartment training. She said she was asked to participate in the national operational commercial program advisory committee. Ms. Evans also said that they will have an infusion of officers for the commercial port this summer. The proportion of travelers appears to be shifting; more Americans are crossing. In September the CBSA passenger vehicle ports-of-entry at Pacific Highway and Douglas will be installing one new RFID lane each, bringing the total to 4 RFID lanes at each port. Relaying a report from Bernie Pitura, Ms. Evans said there are more trucks crossing at the Aldergrove port-of-entry, going from 100 a day to almost 200 a day. She added that an issue at Aldergrove is that there is no broker in the area, so that could be a deterrent for trucking companies using that port.

Hugh Conroy suggested that some kind of kiosk for linking to brokers electronically could be beneficial.

Danielle Evans continued, saying that at Pacific Highway CBSA will be getting a new large scale imaging system. There will be a Hands Across the Border event on June 12th at Peace Arch with scout troops. On May 11th and 12th there was a NEXUS meeting between US CBP and CBSA where both agencies expressed interest in expanding the NEXUS program. They are trying to capitalize on the ease and accessibility of the Birch Bay NEXUS enrollment center. There are over 1.1MM NEXUS members now, with 700k in this area.

Recap of May TBWG meeting

Hugh Conroy recapped the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting that occurred in May. The semi-annual meeting was held in Alexandria Bay, NY. US Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] Administrator Greg Nadeau attended, as well as Deputy Administrator David Kim. Greg Nadeau talked about the FAST Act transportation reauthorization and spoke to the upcoming peer exchange in Bellingham, framing the exchange as a strategic opportunity to prioritize investments. Mr. Conroy said that there was no announcement of award for the application that was submitted for US CBP booth status data feed integration into BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure's [BC MoTI] border wait-time system, but WCOG should hear about the application's status by the end of May. Rob Tardif of the Ontario Ministry of Transportation reported that he is working on a data portal for the passenger information they've collected, Mr. Conroy said. Version 4 of the Binational infrastructure plan (BIIP) is about to be released. Eduardo Haggard from Texas Department of Transportation [TxDOT] presented at TBWG on their border master planning efforts. Mr. Haggard will be attending the peer exchange in Bellingham.

Preclearance update

Hugh Conroy noted that a substantive update on the preclearance agreement has been a long time coming. He included in the meeting packet a preclearance presentation shown by Public Safety Canada at TBWG. Canada intends to bring forth preclearance legislation in the spring. Mr. Conroy noted that Debra Meyers of the Department of Homeland Security [DHS] discussed shared infrastructure between US and Canadian customs agencies and what is still required for that to be a reality.

Todd Carlson said that Congresswoman Del Bene, Congressman Larson and Senator Murray have previously sponsored preclearance legislation in the US.

Border Crossing Infrastructure Prioritization Council

Attached in the packet is a brief authored by US CBP Facilities Management & Engineering [FM&E] regarding the formation of the Border Crossing Infrastructure Prioritization Council [BCIPC], which occurred in 2015. Mr. Conroy said the council, which includes the General Services Administration [GSA], CBP, and other US federal agencies, has paid close attention to the border master planning process on the southern border.

Current Projects

Hugh Conroy informed the group that the IMTC's Border Freight Operations study [BFO] will start up again this summer on June 20th. Student research assistants have been hired, and they will begin survey-training June 14th. On the 15th, the students will go up to border to test out the survey instruments and iron out any logistical kinks. Students will thereafter be at the border collecting data until July 14th.

More detailed border region projects schedule

Mr. Conroy presented an updated project list timeline, attached in the meeting's packet. Projects are categorized by port, funding status, and traffic impact.

Pacific Highway pedestrian routing improvements - first actions

There was discussion last meeting about pedestrian routing between the US CBP and CBSA facilities at Pacific Highway. Hugh Conroy reminded the group of CBSA and CBP's assessment that pedestrian pathing should be prohibited along the southbound truck staging area across from the CBSA facility.

Melissa Fanucci said that she drafted a proposal of the pedestrian plan, which is attached in the meeting packet. The property in question for routing from the border to US CBP facility is owned by the General Services Administration [GSA].

Bill Bullock noted that it is not technically legal to have pedestrians walk against traffic on the road. He added that an interim solution could be to add a gravel pathway that connects the US sidewalk up to border.

Todd Carlson said that on federal property, GSA will want to make the path ADA-accessible.

Melissa Fanucci said that she can develop a more complete list of alternatives after the walkabout at the border during the peer exchange. She reminded the group of the problem with pedestrian pathing at Peace

Arch where the sidewalk in Canada terminates at the border, creating a gap in pedestrian facilities between that and the US CBP car staging area. She also added there is an issue with the pathway from the US CBP Peace Arch facility into Blaine, where southbound pedestrian travel is allowed but northbound pedestrian travel is not. There may be opportunities for improved wayfinding for pedestrians traveling north.

Todd Carlson said that it would be good to package both of those Blaine-area pedestrian projects into one.

June 8-9 border planning peer exchange - update

Hugh Conroy reported that between 30 and 40 people are registered to attend the TBWG peer exchange in Bellingham. Due to travel funding restrictions, there will not be too many out-of-state northern border visitors. There will presentations from CalTrans, TxDOT, the Texas Transportation Institute, among other agencies.

Mr. Conroy said that there will be a bus tour on day one, where attendees will be driven up to tour several border projects in the area. Registered attendees will get the schedule emailed to them, Mr. Conroy said.

Scenario-based evaluation of Cascade Gateway future needs and strategies - discussion and review

Hugh Conroy lead a scenario planning exercise with the group. Everyone around the table gave input on the likelihood of specific scenarios, such as a 40 percent increase in passenger vehicles through the Cascade Gateway in 10, 20, and 50 years. The group also gave input on possible needed improvements and strategies for each scenario.

Adjourned 12:00 PM