

International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

July 16, 2015

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at the CBSA Douglas port-of-entry, Surrey, B.C.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] (Abid Sivic, Simon Leung); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (David Davidson); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Matt Jollymore, Dan Bubas, Bernie Pitura, Craig Scott, Linell Redmond, Daniela Evans); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Bob Wilson, Jaymes McClain); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson); **Transport Canada** (Thomas Kwan); **City of Surrey** (Kristen Tiede); **US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (John Dahm, Ron McMillan)

Current Events Updates

Jim Kohnke said that the BC Chamber of Commerce recently held their annual general meeting [AGM], and there were some border resolutions passed. He passed around hard-copy sheets with links to descriptions of the policies passed by the Chamber. There were a total of five resolutions passed, he said. The first two involved CBSA, one about customs and immigration programs and the other about the collection of duty and taxes at the border. He noted that the AGM was held in northern BC and a number of chambers close to the Alberta border represent merchants who have some concern about people crossing into Alberta for the possible reason of exemption of taxes. Despite an indication that the CBSA issue on infinite collection of duty and taxes could be better addressed under the new “Price Transparency Act”, the motion passed. Another resolution involved travel and the Goods and Services Tax [GST]: it has been suggested to be reinstated on a pilot basis, and it was suggested to be used with Duty Free merchants. The last two resolutions concern international trade with the Pacific Gateway and a border pact about the perception of the preclearance agreement.

Daniela Evans updated the group on changes to CBSA senior positions in the area. Linell Redmond is now Chief of Operations for Pacific Highway traffic, Dan Bubas is the new Pacific Highway Watch Commander, and Bernie Pitura is now Port Chief at Aldergrove. She also said that while the Canadian dollar is dipping in value relative to the US dollar, enforcement is still occurring at the border. Ms. Evans said that CBSA is not expanding and there will be no new staffing or funding coming from the federal level. Traffic has dropped a

little in the region, but at the national level CBSA is taking a look at ten year trends, she added. CBSA also recently welcomed a new president who is former president of the Canada School of Public Service, has worked with Shared Services Canada, and has a strong background in information technology [IT]. President Linda Lizotte-MacPherson started July 6. She noted that the executive vice president Nada Semaan is also strong on the IT front.

John Dahm said that Mike Bol has transferred down to the Seattle CBP office and is no longer Port Director for passenger vehicles. He also said that the newly installed bus kiosks are operational, but CBP is adjusting to the technology. He said that they may need better signage, but noted that there is a learning curve for officers and for bus travelers on how the kiosks work.

Linell Redmond said that the Cascade Cycle Tour will be August 14 and 15, and the riders will be taking a detour because of the Aldergrove port construction. Riders will be going through Pacific Highway instead, she said. They are anticipating about 1,300 bicyclists per day going from Vancouver to Seattle. John Dahm said that many riders will be returning on buses, and CBP is anticipating more bus traffic.

Bernie Pitura said that the Aldergrove port construction is still on schedule and is anticipated to be completed in early fall. There will be a NEXUS lane northbound, he said, and plans are in place for southbound NEXUS approach. Mr. Pitura also noted that about 30% to 34% of crossers at Aldergrove right now are using NEXUS travel documents, so they are anticipating high NEXUS usage when the lane opens. When opened, he said the commercial crossing will no longer have permits, and they are working with Greg Kolesniak and the BC Trucking Association [BCTA] to get the word out.

Daniela Evans said that some southbound traffic at Huntingdon-Abbotsford is still using the northbound lane to bypass congestion in order to get to the southbound NEXUS lane.

Dan Bubas commented on the IMTC freight study currently taking place at the CBSA Pacific Highway commercial crossing, saying that the students have been great to work with and operations are not being interfered with in any way.

Matt Jollymore said that he and Ken Williams of US CBP hosted a Wilson Center tour of the Cascade Gateway for various representatives of U.S. senators across the U.S. They were shown the new NEXUS enrollment center in Birch Bay as part of the tour. He also said that NEXUS membership is growing but there is a slight drop in upcoming applications at the enrollment center. They are doing some outreach to take-on some of the backlog of NEXUS applications at the other NEXUS centers in the region (the Seattle, downtown Vancouver, and YVR Airport NEXUS enrollment centers).

Bob Wilson said that the Washington State legislature just finished its longest session. He said that part of the transportation package passed includes reconstruction of exit 274 on I-5 near Blaine. Mr. Wilson said that it is a sixteen year bill. Todd Carlson added that the exit 274 project will be ten years out. It is a \$45MM project, Mr. Carlson said, and would provide more mobility between the two crossings.

Simon Leung said that BC Ministry of Transportation [BC MoTI] submitted an application to Transport Canada [TC] for a Highway 13 expansion project. They have letters of support from many agencies, and Mr. Leung said they appreciate the support. The project will be about \$23MM, he said, and BC MoTI has the budget for about \$12MM. They are looking for TC funding to close the gap. Thomas Kwan said that there is about \$16MM left in the TC fund. Mr. Kwan added that the TC fund is just one source and there are other sources BC MoTI can apply to for the funds.

Simon Leung also commented on the Highway 11 extension of the southbound NEXUS lane, saying that it is tied up with the Vye Rd overpass project, so it is delayed. Bernie Pitura added that in the interim there could be some right-of-way developed near 4th Ave to create more lane space for the southbound approach.

Thomas Kwan said that on August 19 there will be a teleconference workshop on the border wait-time initiative. The focus will be on the Pt Roberts crossing and assessing the need for border wait-time information there. TC is wrapping up a truck/industry survey, and he said that when it is done, he will share a copy of the study. The freight study is an update to a similar study done in 2008, and they're just capturing a snapshot of origins-destinations, especially for trucks with hazard-placarded goods. Mr. Kwan also said that the current deputy minister is retiring and the new deputy minister Jean-François Tremblay, who is coming from the Privy Council Office, is coming in the next week.

Bernie Pitura said that using historic CBSA data, the recent BCTA survey, and talking to stakeholders, they are anticipating about 50k-70k trucks per year through the new CBSA Aldergrove commercial facility.

David Davidson handed out a BPRI special report booklet, *Washington State's Economy in relation to Canada and the Border*, to the group. The booklet pulls together past studies and papers from the BPRI in recognition of the Institute's launch ten years ago. Mr. Davidson said that he will be taking copies down to Olympia for distribution as well.

Project updates and related discussion

Dynamic Border Management

Continued refinements to RFID business case

Hugh Conroy and David Davidson discussed the preliminary plans to build a business case for an RFID pilot project. They said that a conference call with the CBSA RFID team was helpful in validating the simulation model and data pulled about identification usage was helpful in validating early estimates on traveler frequency. David Davidson said he is aiming for a four page briefing that will discuss a potential RFID pilot.

The trend, Mr. Davidson said, is that there is a relatively small group of unique individuals that make up a significant portion of cross-border trips. From the data, it is estimated that 75k people generate 40 percent of trips through the Cascade Gateway, and giving those 75k travelers RFID cards is a solution to cutting wait-times. David Davidson said that WCOG will use the border simulation model to simulate 40 percent of standard cross-border travelers using RFID and show the effects on border wait-times. Possible additional analyses include calculating the amount of cars that would need to be removed from crossing the border to equate the 40 percent RFID population's effect on wait-times, how many added inspection booths would be necessary to generate similar wait-time reductions, and how many inspection booths would need to be removed *with* a 40 percent RFID population to get back to baseline border wait-times.

Linell Redmond said that CBSA needs to meet and discuss what the best strategy going forward is. David Davidson offered that CBSA and US CBP review the modeling and draft analysis when it is ready, to which they all agreed.

Todd Carlson advised that the metrics used in the analysis be geared towards the appropriate audiences: essentially those who care about the potential benefits and those who potentially could help fund the RFID

pilot. He recommended making a matrix of agencies and the analysis metrics they respectively like to see, such as traffic congestion reduction, environmental benefits, financial breakdowns, and infrastructure alternatives.

Bernie Pitura said that though RFID may have a positive effect on green-house gasses and border line-ups, the back-end work of processing more cars quicker is still there, so CBSA's resources wouldn't likely diminish.

John Dahm said that the majority of travelers in the southbound Ready Lane, about 90 percent, are NEXUS, and he asked why more NEXUS advertising wouldn't be a better solution. David Davidson said that with non-NEXUS RFID cards there is no additional vetting or interviews necessary for distribution of the cards if individuals already have a passport. The RFID cards essentially pair with passports and make them work better, he said.

Mr. Davidson commented on the data collection effort last December, where students recorded inspection dwell times of standard RFID travelers in the southbound Ready Lane. Linell Redmond said that she had concerns about the validity of the average 20 second per-car time-savings associated with using RFID cards instead of passports. Hugh Conroy suggested a meeting with CBSA and US CBP regarding each agency's RFID querying methodology, how it works, and check if they are similar. (For current RFID analysis, RFID time-savings are based on observations of RFID cards being used southbound at US CBP facilities only.)

Bernie Pitura added that there is a tactical advantage to RFID. When an RFID card is waived at a vicinity RFID-reader upstream from the inspection booth, the in-booth border agent knows ahead of time who is in the vehicle before the vehicle reaches the booth.

David Davidson said that an old US CBP analysis 6 or 7 years ago reported there was about a 30 percent time-savings benefit with RFID. He said that we can do more analysis and put students back out in the field and gather more records.

Hugh Conroy reminded the group that the 20 seconds time-savings is an average based on distributions of data, and the model takes values from these distributions, so the 20 seconds is not across the board. David Davidson said that we can also run scenarios where there is an average of 10 seconds of time-savings with RFID instead of 20 and look those outputs as well.

RFID Agenda at the October TBWG meeting

David Davidson said that the Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI] and WCOG will be working on the RFID business case/analysis report. They hope to have it completed by late October for the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] meeting. In the next three weeks he said they aim to get draft out for approval and take suggestions from agencies.

Hugh Conroy said he is working to add RFID to the TBWG action plan to better connect the conversation at the national level. He said the idea would be to use the analysis we would have done and portray RFID as a benefit, but also estimate the costs of infrastructure alternatives that would produce similar border wait-time reductions as the RFID strategy. Mr. Conroy said the near term objective is portraying the potential of RFID with the TBWG without getting too ahead yet in terms of specific card distribution strategies.

Border Freight Operations Study

Update and preliminary observations

A sheet is included in the meeting packet that overviews the project's data collection schedule and fields for collecting data. Some preliminary data (carriers crossing the most frequently and percentage of trucks going through the fast lane) were also pulled from the first four days of data collection at the US CBP Pacific Highway commercial crossing.

Hugh Conroy said that a draft questionnaire for carriers has been circulated. Staff at WCOG are identifying those carriers crossing through the Cascade Gateway the most frequently and will follow up with them with the questionnaire.

Border Infrastructure Investment Plan [BIIP] 3.0

Defining projects on IMTC Project list for incorporation

Todd Carlson said that typically the BIIP has included projects that are programmed but hasn't necessarily included projects planning for the future. He added that the border master plan that he's working on fills the gap for longer term planning.

Simon Leung said that intelligent transportation system [ITS] was not originally a component of the BIIP, but now it is more of a significant component of the BIIP.

Hugh Conroy said that the IMTC project list is included in meeting's packet. Linell Redmond commented on a potential CBSA ITS project for the northbound FAST approach lane at Pacific Highway and adding it to the future project list.

Daniela Evans talked about the FAST lane expansion, and said CBSA and WSDOT should come together and discuss graphics and talk about scoping. Todd Carlson agreed that they should follow-up.

Hugh Conroy asked if CBSA is still interested in a Bluetooth wait-time validation project. Daniela Evans said that they will know more about its fate next meeting after their August discussions about wait-time technology.

Hugh Conroy commented on potential IT improvements regarding gathering better arrival rate data upstream from the border that could be recorded and analyzed for patterns in arrivals to better inform booth management decisions for certain times during the day.

Meeting adjourned 11:15PM