



International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Steering Committee Meeting Summary

January 17, 2019

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at Blaine Boating Center, Blaine, WA.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI]: Amanda Pellam

B.C. Trucking Association: Inger Miller*, Cory Paterson*

Bellingham, Port of: John Michener

Blaine, City of: Ravyn Whitewolf

Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]: Laurie Trautman

Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]: Chris Van Nes, Tracy Letain, Holly Stoner, Dan Bubas, Erin Steeksma, Matt Jollymore

Canadian Consulate Seattle: Gail Horak*

Lynden, City of: Steve Banham

Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council: Jim Kohnke

Representative Suzan DelBene, Office of: Kaylee Galloway

Surrey, City of: Don Buchanan*

Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]: Todd Carlson

Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]: Hugh Conroy, Jaymes McClain, Melissa Fanucci

**attended meeting by phone*

Current Event Updates

Tracy Letain: Commercial truck volumes at Aldergrove are down. Trucks that come to the commercial port-of-entry (POE) outside of the commercial hours of operation are cleared on the passenger vehicle side.

Dan Bubas: CBSA is getting good use out for the Large Scale Imaging device at the Pacific Highway commercial POE. It has helped in several drug seizures.

Erin Steeksma: The commercial exit gates at the Abbotsford POE are under construction, but this won't have much effect on traffic. CBSA is interested in reporting Abbotsford commercial truck wait-times on

WSDOT's northbound vehicle messaging signs (VMS). They are interested in reporting Sumas southbound commercials waits as well through BC MoTI.

Holly Stoner: All 10 inspection booths at the Douglas POE will be retrofitted with sliding doors. Some booths will be upgraded with radio-frequency identification (RFID) antennas during this time. While this occurs, CBSA is committed to having at least 3 regular lanes and 2 NEXUS lanes open at all times. They hope to have this projected wrapped up before spring break.

Chris Van Nes: Some of the speed humps north-and southbound at Cascade Gateway POEs are losing their high-visibility paint, causing damage to some vehicles who drive over them at speed when they cannot see them.

Kaylee Galloway: Congresswomen DelBene is urging the president to temporarily open the U.S. federal government. When federal functions are back to normal, Ms. Galloway would like to highlight work done through the IMTC at the border, especially with infrastructure, so that the Congresswoman can relay information back to Washington.

Hugh Conroy: The WCOG Policy Board met yesterday and discussed the need to amend the long-range project list from the WCOG regional transportation plan. There is interest at the staff level at WCOG regarding adding projects from the IMTC project list to the WCOG long-range project list to give more regional awareness and profile to those projects.

The federal government shutdown has been a concern at WSDOT too – the agency recently sent out an email reassuring federal funding will continue for projects.

Ravyn Whitewolf: The City of Blaine is advocating for a grade separation of Bell Rd over the BNSF railroad tracks at the intersection with Peace Portal Dr, where trains being processed through the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (US CBP) Vehicle and Cargo Inspection System (VACIS) often cut-off access to cars.

John Michener: The Port of Bellingham is working with Ports America on putting a new warehouse on the Bellingham waterfront. The port is also seeing more Canadian companies expanding operations into Whatcom County.

Laurie Trautman: The BPRI at Western Washington University (WWU) has hired 15 WWU students to be research assistants for the Passenger Vehicle Intercept Survey.

Todd Carlson: WSDOT has signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with CBSA to install equipment to measure the performance of the Fast First strategy at the northbound Pacific Highway commercial POE.

Amanda Pellam: Drainage improvements are underway on the BC Hwy 13 project. The BC Hwy 11 project is going to construction soon.

Matt Jollymore: RFID is being installed at inspection booths at Boundary Bay. The NEXUS equipment at Douglas and Pacific Highway is being replaced. For the pedestrian walkway at Pacific Highway, the signage is being prepared and a second row of orange jersey barriers is going to be used to demarcate the path between the U.S. and Canadian facilities.

Melissa Fanucci: She will be working on the 2018 IMTC Performance Review, which will summarize the work done by the IMTC group in 2018 and what goals were accomplished. She is also putting parts of the IMTC Border Master Plan on the IMTC website.

Traffic data from 2018 shows that Douglas and Peace Arch border traffic is now 50 percent NEXUS.

Cory Paterson: The BC Trucking Association has a list of towing companies that have contracts with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) that could potentially help with the truck-stalling problem at the border.

Mr. Paterson has also been hearing that BC companies are expanding to Whatcom County. One of the reasons could be an employer health tax being implemented by the BC government – employees permanently stationed outside the jurisdiction are exempt. Another reason could be BC heavy haul trucking's increasing reliance on storage available in Washington that isn't readily available in BC. The BC permitting system has also been an issue, however a pilot project focused on expediting permits was recently launched.

Mr. Paterson is also interested in a separate discussion with CBP and CBSA regarding cross-border trucking and especially heavy haul.

Todd Carlson: WSDOT is planning to build a weigh-in-motion station (WIM) on SR 9 that will monitor commercial truck traffic using this route. SR 9 in Whatcom County currently does not have a weight station. The WIM is planned to be built near Van Zandt, and overweight trucks caught by the WIM would be sent to an inspection area to be located near Acme.

US CBP Updates: NEXUS hours at Peace Arch, Sumas Port Director, Reimbursable service agreement at Skagit (County) Regional Airport

Hugh Conroy: Due to the U.S. federal government shutdown, US CBP could not attend the meeting. Some updates for the agency include: the NEXUS hours of operation at Peace Arch POE are increasing to midnight; the Sumas POE has a new Port Director after Director J.R. Ortega moved to the southern border; the CBP Reimbursable Services Program is enabling operations at the Skagit Airport, allowing the arrival of international flights.

Review of November 27-28 TBWG Meeting

Hugh Conroy: The Transportation Border Working Group (TBWG) meeting from November 27-28 was held in Halifax, NS. Laurie Trautman and Gale Horak also attended.

At the meeting, CBP discussed facial recognition technology that is starting to be used at airports. This kind of technology could be complicated to implement at the land border.

RFID traveler document technology is still a part of the TBWG action plan, which was added several years ago at the suggestion of WCOG and BPRI.

Updated Resource Manual (available at meeting) and corresponding online data dashboard

Melissa Fanucci: The 2019 IMTC Resource Manual booklet is now available. There is one error in the bus data that will be addressed online.

Todd Carlson: In the data, there's a spike in passenger vehicle volumes in May 2018 at Pacific Highway.

Matt Jollymore: In May the primary inspection canopy was being reconstructed at Douglas, causing traffic to be diverted to Pacific Highway.

Melissa Fanucci: The data in the Resource Manual is available online at the IMTC's website. The data is organized in Tableau data dashboards that can be filtered for custom analysis.

There will be an updated one-pager describing components of the IMTC, including key members, funding, and projects that have been accomplished through the group.

Hugh Conroy: If any steering committee or core group member contact information needs to be updated, please contact Melissa or Hugh.

Pacific Highway & Douglas-Peace Arch Traffic Study – overview of initial results & discussion of additional scenarios to test

Jaymes McClain: In 2014, WCOG began work on the IMTC Dynamic Border Management project. As part of this project, WCOG acquired discrete-event simulation software to use for modeling a variety of operational and policy scenarios in the border environment. Border simulation modeling has been previously applied to the RFID Business Case and to NEXUS booth scheduling at CBP's Peace Arch POE.

In 2018, the border simulation model was structurally revamped and refreshed with 2018 border traffic data. The current model can simulate multiple POEs as part of a system. This allows for scenarios to be tested where changes in the operations of one POE can affect neighboring POEs, with accepted border metrics (such as vehicle border wait time and traffic throughput) capturing the extent of the effects.

The border simulation model was applied to two separate operational scenarios at the Pacific Highway and Douglas-Peace Arch system of POEs:

- The proposed addition of inspection capacity at CBP Pacific Highway
- The interim decrease in inspection capacity at CBSA Pacific Highway during a likely future redevelopment construction project.

The traffic study analyzes the effects of each scenario on current traffic conditions and on forecast traffic conditions for 3-hour weekend peak periods in August. The model outputs used in the analysis include traffic throughput, average actual border wait time (and standard deviation), and cumulative actual border wait time (the sum of every vehicle's wait time).

The analyses for these operational scenarios are part of the draft traffic study. The border simulation model is capable of addition scenario testing, such as NEXUS population increases.

Dan Bubas: Graphics for this kind of modeling can help the audience better understand the model and the analysis - for example, animated queueing.

Todd Carlson: It would be interesting to model the border queue upstream, for example the southbound NEXUS lane at Pacific Highway being cut off by high traffic volumes in standard lanes.

Communications Protocol tabletop exercise – next steps

Hugh Conroy: There was discussion in previous meetings about a border traffic incident tabletop exercise after the communications protocol was updated with current phone numbers and the order of communications confirmed. A first draft outline of a tabletop exercise script was written by WCOG staff. Participants and observers are still being identified for the exercise. The plan is to use the March 21st Steering Committee meeting to conduct the tabletop exercise.

IMTC project list- initial refresh for 2019

A draft 2019 IMTC Project List is attached in the meeting packet. The group reviewed the highlighted projects (those that have been completed and those in need of updating).

Melissa Fanucci: The Peace Arch-Douglas Pedestrian Path is completed, at least as much as Washington State Parks is able to do. A part of the trail that connects to the CBP facility is not wheelchair (ADA) accessible. This part is owned by the U.S. General Services Administration (GSA).

Dan Bubas: CBSA still sees fluctuations in the commercial truck wait times caused by the positioning of trucks over the loop detectors. An assessment of the system is still of interest.

Hugh Conroy: The CBP VPC data feed has been integrated into the Cascade Gateway Border Data Warehouse, however there are no query tools to aid in downloading the data. With funding, the VPC feed archive could be accessed similar to the loop detector data.

The Pt. Roberts-Boundary Bay wait-time/ATIS project could be pulled from the project list. The wait time highway signs in the region help travelers make routing decisions, however Pt. Roberts has only one border access point.

Cross-border mail/parcel pickup study

Hugh Conroy: Discussion at past meetings has indicated an interest in better understanding the dynamics behind cross-border travel for mail and package services. This proposed study would look at the costs associated with shipping packages to Canada, why so many Canadians have PO boxes in the U.S., and what possible changes in that industry could cause significant changes in cross-border travel volumes.