

International Mobility & Trade Corridor Program Core Group Meeting Summary

October 20, 2016

Meeting packet available at: theIMTC.com/meetings

Meeting location

The meeting was held at Hazelmere Country Club, Surrey, BC.

Meeting attendance

B.C. Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] (Abid Sivic, Simon Leung); **Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA]** (Brad Valentine, Tammy Rathgeber, Colleen Pinvidic, Bernie Pitura); **Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG]** (Hugh Conroy, Melissa Fanucci, Jaymes McClain); **Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT]** (Todd Carlson, Jason Beloso, Cliff Hall); **Transport Canada [TC]** (Chris Hoff); **City of Surrey** (Don Buchanan); **US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP]** (Ron McMillan, Phillip Stanford); **BC Trucking Association [BCTA]** (Lindsay Samson); **Border Policy Research Institute [BPRI]** (Laurie Trautman); **Pacific Corridor Enterprise Council** (Jim Kohnke); **SmartRail** (Kenneth Jones); **A&A Customs Broker** (Richard Dendy); **West Coast Duty Free** (Len DaSilva); **Aldergrove Duty Free** (Greg Bloudell); **Abbotsford Duty Free** (Paul Dickinson); **Vancouver International Airport Authority** (Raymond Segat); **US Consulate Vancouver** (Mike Bradecamp); **Canadian Consulate** (Bryce Campbell); **Federal Highway Administration [FHWA]** (Sharleen Bakeman); **Washington State Transportation Commission** (Reema Griffith); **Representative Suzan DelBene's Office** (Kaylee Galloway); **San Juan County** (Rick Hughes); **TransLink** (Andrew McCurran); **Citizen** (Jay Brandt)

Current event updates

Ken Jones expressed his interest in the relocation of the railroad from the White Rock and Blaine waterfronts. He reported that the federal government in Canada is showing interest and that a recent meeting between the Governor of Washington and Premier of British Columbia meeting included this topic.

Phillip Stanford told the group that the approach lanes were recently restriped at the US Customs and Border Protection [US CBP] Lynden port-of-entry. The roof of the Lynden facility was also renovated. There is no new news on a NEXUS lane approach at Lynden, Mr. Stanford said.

Todd Carlson said that he recently spoke with the BC Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure [BC MoTI] project manager of the BC Highway 13 improvements. The Washington State Department of Transportation [WSDOT] is widening the Guide Meridian (SR 539, which connects to BC Highway 13) from

Lynden to the border, which will not occur until 2023. He explained the importance of coordination between transportation agencies of both sides of the border for these improvements. Mr. Carlson also commented on the recent meeting between WA Governor Jay Inslee and BC Premier Christy Clark. There will be some follow-up involving the BC-WA Joint Transportation Executive Council [JTEC], and this is an opportunity to discuss continuation of IMTC program funding.

Hugh Conroy added documents to the meeting packet that describe the memorandum of understanding [MOU] that was signed by the Governor and Premier regarding the advancement of economic opportunities between Washington State and British Columbia (a summary article from the office of Governor Inslee and the MOU document that was signed by both parties). He highlighted several points of interest in the documents regarding coordinated transportation planning and investments, which correlate with IMTC goals and strategies.

Jason Beloso of WSDOT brought hand-outs summarizing some of the findings of their recent truck parking survey. For instance, due to limited parking options, some trucks have to park on sides of the road for rest, though they don't want to. There were 1100 respondents to the survey. He also said that WSDOT has had project requests totaling \$6BN, though only \$38MM is available for funding.

Bryce Campbell of the Consulate General of Canada in Seattle thanked participants who helped with putting together this year's border ports and rail tour.

Brad Valentine commented that Canada Border Services Agency [CBSA] is still developing their master plan for the Pacific Highway border crossing. They are still in the initial planning stages, he said. CBSA has engaged with the city of Blaine for input regarding the approach to the crossing. Mr. Valentine said that they will reach out to other agencies (including BC MoTI, WSDOT, and BC Trucking Association [BCTA]) about approaches. He added CBSA has projects ongoing at the Douglas and Pacific Highway ports of entry to increase the number of RFID technology capable lanes and they are continuing the work on a FAST-first commercial truck approach at Pacific Highway Commercial. Both are slated for completion early in the new calendar year.

CBSA Port Chief Bernie Pitura echoed Chief Vanderstar's comments from last steering committee meeting regarding the need to better understand the shifting trends in trade in the Lower Mainland as it relates to the flow of commercial border traffic. CBSA is looking for stakeholder input on this topic in coordination with IMTC agencies. Mr. Pitura also explained that there still seems to be a lack of knowledge in the trucking industry regarding Aldergrove crossing being a full service commercial port-of-entry. He said they will be conducting some outreach, including calling shippers directly. A recent article on the Aldergrove port may have misled some about the services at Aldergrove, so CBSA is trying to get out the correct info. Traffic is still growing at Aldergrove, Mr. Pitura said, going from about 500 trucks per month at opening to 7,000 per month currently. He added that they are looking for updates on the progress of the Highway 11 and Highway 13 improvements.

Jaymes McClain reported that the project database for the IMTC Border Freight Operations study has been cleaned and organized. Agencies can contact him if they would like a copy of the database to query border freight data: 360-685-8391 jaymes@wcog.org

B.C. TransLink Regional Goods Movement Strategy update – *Andrew McCurran, TransLink*

Andrew McCurran of TransLink gave a presentation on the draft Regional Goods Movement Strategy [RGMS] for Metro Vancouver. Mr. McCurran has been the lead for the strategy for a year and a half. They are looking to get the strategy approved end of this year or early next year.

Mr. McCurran explained that TransLink has four key functions when it comes to goods movement: infrastructure management, multi-partner coordination, regional consistency (e.g. harmonization of programs and strategies across agencies and jurisdictions in the region), and data collection and analysis. With regards to coordination between multiple partners, advancing urban freight priorities is one of the main foci in addition to advancing Asian-Pacific Gateway-oriented freight and advancing sustainability and livability goals.

TransLink has identified several key challenges that hinder the private sector. A lack of incentives and alternatives for passenger car drivers to reduce vehicle use creates a lack of travel time reliability and increased congestion. Lack of harmonized regulations between jurisdictions, limited industrial land accessibility, and the movement of goods being undervalued in the public sphere also present challenges to the private sector. Mr. McCurran also explained that the movement of goods has a few key negative impacts on community livability, which TransLink has identified as competition for scarce space, safety, noise, and emissions.

To combat these challenges, the Regional Good Movements Strategy identifies two goals. One goal is goods movement efficiency through routing commercial vehicles away from congestion and increasing travel time predictability. Another goal is reducing commercial vehicle collisions, noise, and emissions to create a cleaner, safer, and quieter system.

In order to achieve the RGMS goals, Mr. McCurran presented three strategies: 1) Invest strategically to maintain and grow the system, 2) Manage the system to be efficient and user-focused, and 3) Partner to make it happen. There are over seventy actions suggested to carry out these strategies, some already underway. One prominent action is the proposal to establish a coordinated public-private “Greater Vancouver Urban Freight Council,” which would meet two to four times per year to facilitate RGMS priorities, coordinate between partner agencies, and provide a forum for the exchanging knowledge and ideas.

Mr. McCurran said that they anticipate urban freight to grow at the same rate as the region’s population.

Road Usage Charge Test – Paying for Roads by the Mile – *Reema Griffith, WA State Transportation Commission*

Reema Griffith of the Washington State Transportation Commission presented on the assessment that the commission is conducting regarding road usage charges. She explained that there have been ongoing talks about maintaining transportation infrastructure, especially finding funding. As of 2016 there is a 49.4 cent per-gallon state fuel tax, of which only 8 cents go toward maintenance, preservation, and improvements to safety of state highways, bridges, and ferries. Currently, about 69 percent of fuel tax revenue goes to debt service payments, Ms. Griffith said. In 2026 that percentage is projected to climb to 77 percent.

Washington State currently has a miles-per-gallon [MPG] rating of 20.5, which is a bit below the national average. Though the federal Corporate Average Fuel Economy [CAFE] standards set a goal of 54.5 MPG by

2025, conservative forecasts estimate that Washington vehicles old and new will only have an average MPG of 35 in 2035. However, this would still mean a 45 percent decline in fuel tax revenue per mile driven.

To combat a declining revenue, the commission has identified a road usage charge as a viable future funding source. This strategy would charge drivers for every mile they drive on public roads rather than per gallon of gas purchased.

Ms. Griffith said that a 25-member steering committee has been working on this strategy since 2012. The committee is made up of commissioners, legislators, and various other public and private stakeholders. The basis of the assessment, she explained, is to have a sustainable funding source for the state's transportation system, ensure there is consumer choice in the matter, ensure that during transition from one tax to another that drivers don't double-pay, and assume revenue neutrality with the new charge.

To implement a per mile charge, strategies include: a flat fee time permit, odometer readings, an automated mileage meter that plugs into vehicles, and a smart phone app.

The road usage charging is being looked at in 14 western states. This summer, the US Federal Highway Administration [FHWA] awarded Washington State \$3.8MM to prepare a pilot test, which would begin in 2017.

Annual fuel tax hikes won't keep up with transportation needs, Ms. Griffith explained. By comparison, to reach the revenue of a road usage charge at 2.4 cents per mile, the fuel tax would need to increase by 1.5 cents per year from 2019 to 2043. Currently, high MPG and electric vehicles pay little to no fuel tax, but a road usage charge would tax all vehicles at the same rate.

There are challenges presented with a road usage charge, Ms. Griffith said. The state would still need to be able to charge people who come from out of state and not charge Washington residents driving outside of the state. Technology would also be needed to distinguish between Washington public road usage and private road usage.

As a next step, Ms. Griffith said that the public needs to test the strategy. For the 2017 pilot, 2,000 participants from 5 regions in Washington, plus a small pool of out of state and Canadian drivers, will test the four payment methods that the state has outlined. Ms. Griffith said that they are focusing on vehicles under 10k pounds for now, as commercial trucks have their own fees.

Sharleen Bakeman of the US Department of Transportation [USDOT] said that there will need to be considerations for things like Uber, tourists paying their fair share, and commercial trucks versus passenger cars paying for usage.

San Juan Islands flights to Victoria – *Rick Hughes, San Juan County Council*

Rick Hughes of the San Juan County Council presented to the group about opening up more air transportation opportunities with Canada. He explained that San Juan County is closer to the Capital Regional District [CRD] in Canada than to mainland US. It is about 18 miles from Friday Harbor, WA to Sidney, BC, but it is difficult to travel across the border, he explained.

Washington State Ferry travel between San Juan County and Canada is time consuming and infrequent, Mr. Hughes said. Current charter flights are also expensive (\$300-\$700 round trip). To fly privately between Canada and Friday Harbor, there is no schedule and travel may be based on the availability of US CBP.

As a result of the 2008 economic crash, they lost 500 jobs in 3 months, Mr. Hughes said. The county is coming out of those economic woes now, and they are looking at how to deal with the unpredictable nature of their leading economic activity, tourism, and how to develop long-term, sustainable economic options.

Mr. Hughes said that through public and private partnerships, they hope to have more frequent, scheduled direct flights from Friday Harbor to BC destinations like Victoria, Tofino, and Vancouver. One challenge is to have adequate space and facilities for customs agents to conduct routine inspections. He said they hope to begin international flights by January 2017.

Mr. Hughes said that they haven't yet discussed increased international flight activity with CBSA. If passenger preclearance is furthered in the region, international travel from San Juan County would be much easier, Mr. Hughes added.

BC-WA Regional Protocol for Binational, Interagency Communication about Highway and Border Station

Incidents that Affect Cross-border Travel - Last updated in 2013, review next steps for making any needed revisions and/or improvements to how information is stored and accessed when needed

Attached in the meeting packet is the current protocol for international incident communications. It outlines the connections from an initiating agency to other agencies critically important to managing an incident affecting cross-border transportation in the BC-Washington region.

Bernie Pitura commented that Delta and Abbotsford police departments would be important to contact for Boundary Bay and Abbotsford-Huntingdon incidents.

Abid Sivic of BC MoTI said that the phone numbers of agencies need to be updated. He also explained that their agency has dynamic signage throughout the Lower Mainland that could be used for communicating information to the public.

Hugh Conroy said that names and numbers will be updated, and the protocol document will be sent back out.

Border Master Planning - IMTC considering adopting elements of border master planning

Hugh Conroy reviewed the recent peer exchange and federal interest in having regions on the US-Canada border consider adoption of elements of border master planning. Other border master planning efforts are a bit more detail-oriented than the annually updated IMTC project list, Mr. Conroy said, and some of the efforts conducted under the umbrella of IMTC would need to consider a longer planning horizon.

There was discussion at the Transportation Border Working Group [TBWG] peer exchange in Bellingham this summer, Mr. Conroy said. Participants from agencies along the US-Mexico border who have collaborated on border master planning efforts discussed elements of the process, such as project ranking and categorization and linking planning efforts to outlined goals and strategies. Mr. Conroy also explained that the White House led, multi-agency border infrastructure coordination council cited its reliance on these master planning efforts for validation of its project selection process.

At last month's IMTC steering committee meeting, members reviewed the various possible elements entailed in adopting a border master planning approach. From that meeting, the Whatcom Council of Governments [WCOG] agreed to drafting a work plan for the development of a longer range border master planning effort. Attached in the meeting packet is a draft of such a work plan. In addition to the current functions of the IMTC group, as administered by WCOG, the periodically updated regional border project list would be expanded to a border master plan. Among other actions, this would push project planning horizons out from current-need to 5 years and beyond.

Sharleen Bakeman explained that even though federal Coordinated Border Infrastructure [CBI] funding has dried up, there are potential opportunities in the FAST Act federal authorization for funding an effort like this. The money may still be there, she said, if the planning efforts are formed to meet the right requirements.

Hugh Conroy spoke to the federal interests in adopting performance measures. Melissa Fanucci has compiled several metrics for measuring performance in the border environment (such as traffic volumes and border wait times), but project impacts measured by performance could be tricky, he explained.

Hugh Conroy reminded the group that there will be a TBWG meeting November 2nd and 3rd. There will be further discussions on preclearance, though Mr. Conroy said he is not sure if there will be any new information regarding the issue. He asked agencies to pass along any ideas they are considering regarding how future preclearance options may improve operations at specific facilities. Mr. Conroy said that he can add those thoughts and ideas to the discussion at TBWG.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:55 AM